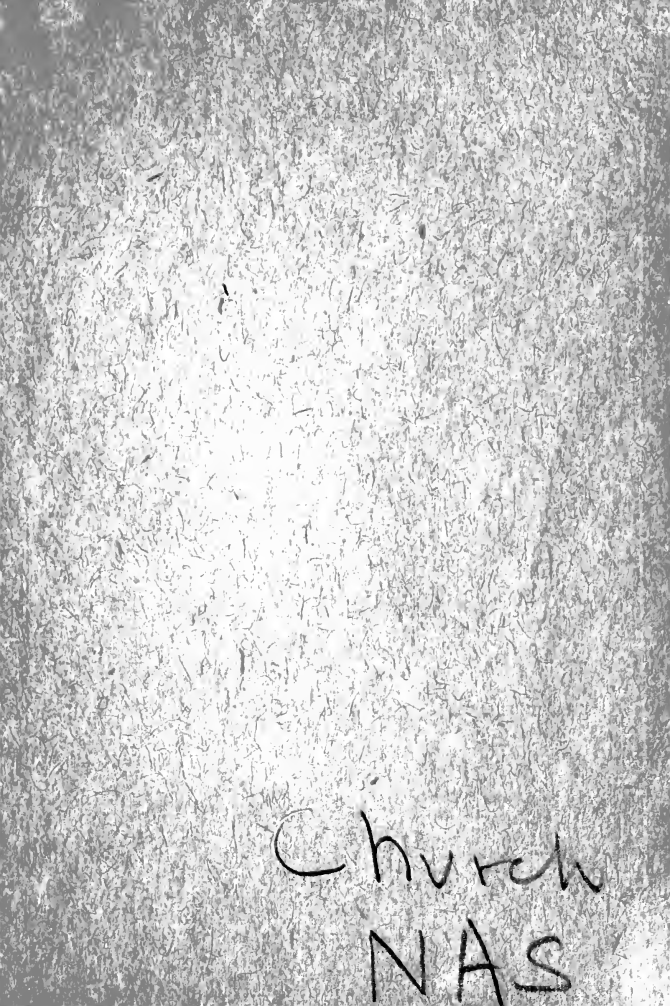
Church
NAS

"Oh! my kitten," sobbed Allie."—*Page* 124.


A
CHRISTMAS
WREATH
for
Little People
BY
SPIEGLE-JOHNSON Sc.

A

Christmas Wreath,

FOR

LITTLE PEOPLE.

By ELLA RODMAN.

PHILADELPHIA:
PARRY & M^cMILLAN,
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TO

My Little Cousin Carrie,

THIS VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

INTRODUCTION.

"A CHRISTMAS-WREATH!" And what shall it be, Bright-eyes? What would make a suitable Wreath for Christmas-time?

There are bright red berries, and dark green leaves, that flourish even through frost and snow, and they twine these into garlands, and hang the hall with them on Christmas-eve; and there are Christmas-greens that they wind around the pillars in the church, and they put large branches in the corners; but it is not this that I mean; we are talking now of another wreath.

And Bright-eyes looks up, and says that *she* knows what is meant, and that it would make a pretty wreath to write all the good

things that people have done since last Christmas; and her little brother, remembering the bunch of rods that he has been promised, thinks it would be a good plan to write all the *bad* things that have been done; but this would be a wreath of withered leaves for Christmas-time. And another little boy thinks that a Christmas-Wreath should be made very large, and of all sorts of good things, but this wreath would not last very long, if hung where *he* could reach it.

Carrie looks thoughtful, and wishes that she could see Santa Claus himself, and hear him describe the different places he has visited. How much he would have to tell! And how charming it would be to gather around the little man, as he sits in a comfortable arm-chair, with his pack of goods lying beside him, and troops of his little friends crowding close to hear the wonderful tales he must have to relate!

Little children far and near—good chil-

dren and bad—rich and poor—he knows them all; and how he could talk of the different stockings he has filled, and the different things that each child wished for, and the many rooms he has entered! Sometimes there were heavy curtains, and beautifully-carved little cribs with white counterpanes, and pictures on the walls; sometimes there was plainer furniture, with neat, patchwork quilts, and lower ceilings; and sometimes there would be hardly any furniture at all, although little stockings were hung about the fire-place, and little heads were busy, in dreams, with thoughts of Santa Claus, and all the attendant delights of Christmas-day.

Sometimes there were houses which he passed without entering at all: sometimes it was poverty—sometimes grief—sometimes the absence of little children, that kept him away; but the history of these firesides should be twined into the wreath,

too; for even on Christmas—which brings to most houses gladness and rejoicing—in some is darkness and the shadow of death.

So the Christmas-Wreath shall tell of the rich and the poor—the gay and the sad; and may it find, this year, but few who cannot laugh and be merry at the Festival Season.

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A

CHRISTMAS WREATH.

HETTY'S LITTLE BOY.

It was the afternoon of Christmas Eve, a great many years ago; and in a poor part of the city, where the dingy houses were closely huddled together, a heavy fall of snow had mingled with the dirt, and in some places it looked white no longer, but like a kind of light-coloured mud.

There were a great many little children, on that Christmas Eve, who looked out from their pleasant windows on the snow where it had not been soiled and darkened, and thought of Santa Claus, in his little sleigh, and what a pleasant evening it was for him to come down. Though down from *where*, they could scarcely have told.

At the door of one of those dingy-looking

houses stood a little girl, about eight years old, whose thin, ragged dress looked any thing but comfortable, such cold weather. She looked neither smiling nor angry; but her face wore an expression as if she had not seen much happiness in the world, and she seemed to be hardly thinking about any thing. She never *expected* any pleasure; and she did not feel disappointed when one day passed on after another, and brought nothing but work and cold, and sometimes hunger. She might have hoped just a little, though: how did she know but that something pleasant was on its way to her then?

But if you had said this to Hetty, she would have put back the tangled hair that straggled over her face, and looked up to see who could be talking so strangely; and then she would have shaken her head sadly, and thought no more about it. There she stood, and watched the little ragged children who were paddling in the snow; and she looked up to the blue sky, and thought it a pity that any thing so beautiful should come to so dismal a place.

In the one room of the house sat Hetty's

old grandmother, who was both cross and sick; and Hetty would not have been surprised, nor would she have cared much, to be called in at any moment. She was not looking out there because she enjoyed it, but because she did not know what else to do, just then. She heard one of the children talking about Christmas, and she remembered that this was a time when people who did'nt live in *their* dingy court got handsome presents, and had a great deal of pleasure; but of the birth of the Saviour poor Hetty was wofully ignorant.

She stood digging her toeless shoe into the dirt, and something was turned over that looked a little strange. She examined it closely, and found that it was a bright copper penny. Hetty read "one cent," and felt almost as rich as a great many people would to find a large gold-piece. Many children would laugh at this; to *them* the idea of picking up a penny would seem ridiculous; but this poor child lived where even the bright sun seldom came, and where money, and the pleasant things that money brings, were almost unknown.

Hetty stood polishing her newly-found treasure with a corner of the rag that served her for an apron; and while she examined it carefully, and counted the thirteen stars on one side, she began to think about spending it. At first, she meant to have put it carefully away; but then she reflected that it would do no one any good in a corner of that old cupboard; and although a great many tempting things that she remembered to have seen in a shop-window danced before her eyes, she looked in the door at her grandmother, who sat by the stove, almost bent double with age and rheumatism, and she thought that as the poor old woman had so very little comfort in the world, she would give her a treat on Christmas Eve.

There is, to be sure, not much that is nice —that is, what little girls would think nice— to be bought with a penny; but the old woman was very fond of snuff, and Hetty knew that she could get quite a paper of that for a penny. So she walked slowly out of the court, thinking as she went; and then she turned the corner, and ran swiftly down three or four streets.

There was the shop, at last; and oh! how beautiful to Hetty's eyes looked that window as it had been arranged for Christmas! There were white-sugar doves, with blue ribbons around their necks, and glittering strawberries, made of candy, and long candy horns innumerable. Hetty stood feasting her eyes, and wishing that the penny had been more.

She knew that the woman kept snuff, and a great many other things, in the back part of the store; and she went in and asked for what she wanted. But there were a great many other customers in the shop, who had more money to spend than Hetty; so she was pushed one side, and stood watching the woman, while she tied up parcels of good things, and wondered where all the money came from.

Hetty had walked back, to make room for the people who thronged in, close to a door that opened into a small room; and as it was not quite shut, she looked in. There was a bed in the room, and a comfortable stove; and far off in a corner sat a beautiful little boy, who was sobbing bitterly. Hetty

thought him the loveliest creature she had ever seen; he had long, light curls, and great black eyes, and a beautiful colour in his plump cheeks.

Hetty pushed the door open carefully and walked into the room.

"What is the matter?" said she, very softly.

"I want to go home!" sobbed the child, "I want my mamma!"

"Where is your home?" asked Hetty; but the child only cried afresh, and said, "I want my mamma!"

Hetty felt puzzled, and scarcely knew what to do. She had never liked the looks of the woman who kept the shop; and now she was afraid that she would hurt the little boy. She stooped down to smooth his long curls, and saw that one had been cut off close, just in the middle.

"Who did this?" she whispered.

"*She* did," replied the child, pointing toward the shop: "she cut it off when she brought me in here, though I told her not to, and that my mamma would be very angry."

Hetty sat down by the child, and asked

him a great many questions; and, at last, he seemed to feel quite at home with her, and told her that he had gone out with his nurse, and, while she stood talking to an acquaintance, he slipped away from her and ran around the corner; and then this woman seized him and carried him into the store. She cut off one of his curls, and told him that he must be *her* little boy now; but he said that it was not a pretty place, and he didn't want to stay there. He told Hetty about the large house he lived in, a great way off, and the fine things that were in it; and he talked a great deal about "his mamma," who, Hetty was quite sure, must be a very beautiful lady.

The child wore a handsome plaid blouse, with little plaid stockings to match, and a rich collar, deeply worked; and a beautiful little hat, with a feather in it, was lying on the table. But he cried nearly all the time, although he seemed to be afraid to cry out loud; and asked for "his mamma" so often, that Hetty felt quite sorrowful.

She looked into the store—the woman was

busy yet; and she asked the little boy if he would like to go with her.

"Yes," he replied, "if you will take me to my mamma."

Hetty promised that she would try to find his mother, and then she looked around to see how they were to get out. They could not go through the shop, because the woman was there; but at last she saw a door, and having opened it, she found that it led into another street. She put the little boy's hat on his head, and taking his hand, they went out very softly.

Hetty did not know what to do with her charge. It was now almost night, and too late to think of finding his own home; so she walked on with him, until they came to the poor little street where her grandmother lived.

But the child was disappointed, and began to cry bitterly; he had never been accustomed to such dismal-looking places, and felt afraid that he would not see his mother again. Hetty soothed him as well as she was able, and promised so faithfully to take him home in the morning, that he dried his tears, and

"Taking his hand, they went out softly."—*Page* 16.

began to look about him wonderingly. The children of the neighbourhood crowded around, and touched his hair and his clothes, as if he had been some curious animal that they had never seen before; and the little fellow seemed to enjoy their surprise, and assumed quite lordly airs.

When Hetty entered the room, leading in a beautiful little boy, her old grandmother started up so suddenly and glared at the child in so much surprise, that the boy was frightened, and burst out into a fresh crying spell.

"Hetty Dobbs!" exclaimed the old woman angrily, "what have you been doing? Where did this child come from?"

Hetty told her how she had found him, and that she would take him back to his mother in the morning; but her grandmother muttered to herself for a long time, and wondered how the boy was to be fed, when they could scarcely get bread to put in their own mouths.

Hetty placed the child on a little stool; and then taking a broken mug, ran out to buy him some milk with the penny she had

found. While she was gone, little Harry (for that, he told Hetty, was his name) sat there so much frightened that he didn't dare to move, for the old woman stared at him, with her elbows resting on her knees, until he felt afraid that she would eat him.

But Hetty came back with the milk; and then she crumbled a *very* little piece of bread in it, for the poor thing hadn't much, and made Harry what *she* thought a very nice supper; and the old grandmother thought so too, for she looked just ready to snatch it away from him. Hetty wished that she could find another penny to buy the old woman some snuff; but the wonder was that she had found *that* in so miserable a place.

Harry seemed to her almost like a little canary bird, that had flown in from some beautiful region; and she handled him as tenderly as though she had been afraid of his dropping to pieces, and folded his beautiful clothes very carefully, and hung his little hat quite out of reach on a high peg.

Harry looked at her wonderingly while she walked about the small room, putting things in order; and it seemed to him so

strange to be in such a poor place, that he thought he must be dreaming. Hetty brought out her treasures to amuse him, and shewed him some bits of coloured glass, and a few gaudy beads, that she considered quite splendid; but Harry soon grew sleepy, and the little girl made him a sort of nest in one corner of the room, and covered him up as warmly as she could with nearly all her own clothes.

And the little boy went to sleep on that Christmas Eve in a strange place; while in his own beautiful home, his mother was wringing her hands and walking the floor in agony; for, like Rachel in the Bible, she was mourning for her child, and would not be comforted. There were beautiful toys lying by the place where little Harry's stocking should have been hung, but his crib was empty; and his mother wept, and feared that she would never see his long curls resting on the pillow again.

And while Harry's mother was crying, other parents were filling their children's stockings with presents, and looking at them as they slept in their comfortable little beds

—smiling to think of the shouts and laughter with which they would dive down to the very bottom of those stockings in the morning.

Hetty looked upon her little boy as a Christmas gift: he seemed to have been sent there to light up that dull place; and she watched him as he slept, and touched his soft cheek, and wished that she could keep him always, as children love to keep and pet a little bird. But Harry would not have liked to stay any better than little birds like to be shut up in cages; and all Hetty's kindness could not make him forget his beautiful home and loving mother.

As Hetty lay shivering in her hard bed, she felt glad to think that Harry was warm and comfortable; and then she began to wonder why it was that she was so lonely—no one in the world but her old grandmother, and *she* didn't seem to care much about her; why did she not live in a beautiful house, like the one Harry had told her about, and have him for her little brother?

A beautiful star seemed to have crept into the sky while Hetty was thinking, and it shone right in through the window, for, as

they had no shutters or curtains, she could see it quite plainly; and the star seemed to have come out to cheer her up, and tell her that there were *some* pleasant things which she could enjoy as well as those who were rich and lived in fine houses. So, after taking another look at Harry to see that he was well covered up, Hetty fell asleep, and did not awake until the bright winter sun was streaming in through their little window.

She got up softly, and kindled a fire with some shavings and sticks that she had picked up, and then she put an old, bent-up kettle on the stove, and brought out a few cold potatoes and part of a small loaf of bread. Harry still slept; and as she had no milk this morning, and nothing that he would be likely to eat, she did not wake him until she and her grandmother had finished their breakfast, and she had cleared up the room.

Then she took Harry up very gently, and dressed him as nicely as possible; and having put on her own little hood, and made her grandmother comfortable, she asked Harry if they should go and look for his mother?

The little fellow screamed for joy at the

idea of going home again; and seemed so delighted to get away from that dull place, that Hetty felt like crying to see how glad he was to leave her. Harry would have been glad to keep her with him always; but it was very natural that he should wish to get back to his mother and his own home.

Hetty lifted the little boy carefully over all the puddles, and would stand and wait to cross the streets until there was scarcely a horse to be seen in the distance; but after walking a little while, she stopped and wondered which way they were to go. Harry would know the house when they came to it, but he could not tell her how to get there, and he had said that it was a long distance off.

So she walked on until they came to a row of handsome houses, and she took Harry past them all, and asked him if he lived in one of those; but the little boy did not remember ever to have seen them before. They could not find the right place; and Hetty almost despaired of ever taking Harry to his mother.

But while she walked along very slowly,

looking at the houses, she felt a sudden jerk; and, looking around, she saw that a girl very much dressed had snatched Harry up in her arms, and was kissing him rapturously. Harry seemed so glad to see her, that Hetty thought this must be the nurse who had lost him the day before; but the girl ran off with him, and soon turning a corner, was quite out of sight—leaving poor Hetty standing there in the street, and feeling as if every gleam of sunshine had been taken away from her.

A kind-hearted storekeeper, noticing her dismal face, asked what was the matter; and Hetty bursting into tears, told him the whole story: how she had found the penny, and meant to buy some snuff for her grandmother with it, and then she had spent it in milk for her little boy, and loved him so dearly; and now he had been snatched away from her, without even bidding her good-by.

The storekeeper was a fat, good-natured looking man, and he hated to see any little girl so unhappy on Christmas morning; so, as he felt quite prosperous and comfortable, he took Hetty into the store, and gave her

some snuff for her grandmother, and then made up a nice Christmas-box for herself, in which he put raisins, and figs, and rock-candy, and a great many good things that Hetty had scarcely seen before.

She thanked him very much, and was going out of the door, but the man called her back.

"Did you tell me that you were very poor?" he asked.

Hetty replied, "Yes, sir," and hung her head very low, for she felt ashamed of their poverty.

"My own children will be none the poorer for it," said the storekeeper to himself; and having found a small basket, he put a loaf of bread in it, and some sugar, and tea, and rice, and a salt fish; and on top of the whole he placed a small chicken.

"There," said he, as he handed the basket to the grateful and astonished Hetty—"there is a Christmas dinner to make up for the loss of your little boy; and you must stop crying this minute, and go home and cook the chicken, so that the old lady, your grandmother, may have some meat to eat, for once in a while."

He then told Hetty very particularly how to draw the chicken, and how to roast it; and then he gave her a little paper of thyme to put in the dressing, and told her to use some of their old crusts for this, and, when that loaf of bread was gone, to come to him for another. Then, finding that there was a little room left in the basket, he crowded in six nice potatoes; and sent Hetty off with her arms quite full of gifts.

This was Hetty's first Christmas that had ever been distinguished by anything like a present; and she wondered if the kind storekeeper was not the very Santa Claus himself, that she had heard the children talk about. Little Harry, too, seemed like some good angel; for if she had not found him, and passed the store to look for his home, she did not believe that the man would have seen her at all.

The old grandmother was even more pleased than Hetty at the sight of the good things she had brought home; and they made quite a large fire in the old stove, and roasted the chicken nicely. Their Christmas dinner was very much enjoyed; and the

storekeeper thought that even his tasted better, when he remembered Hetty's happy look as she trudged off with her basket.

Little Harry's mother cried again for joy, as she folded him in her arms; and he sat on her lap and told her about the queer place he had slept in, and the little girl who had been so kind to him; but when his mother heard this, she rang the bell for the nurse, and inquired very particularly about Hetty, for she wished to make her a handsome present for having taken such good care of her little boy. But the girl said that she had not particularly noticed her, and was quite sure that she should not know her again, if she saw her, she was so much taken up with seeing Master Harry. Mrs. Rogers, Harry's mother, felt very sorry that she could not thank Hetty for having been so kind.

Harry was soon busy with his Christmas toys; and in a short time he had almost forgotten Hetty and his having been lost at all.

It was now two years since Hetty found her little boy, and a great many changes had

taken place in that time. Her old grandmother died; and some kind ladies who had called to see them had the little girl put in the Orphan Asylum, where she was fed, and taken care of, and taught to work, so that, when she was old enough, she could support herself by going out to work for other people.

There were a great many children in this place, and Hetty liked it very much; she thought it very pleasant to go to church and Sunday-school on Sunday, when they all wore the same kind of bonnets and dresses, and walked two and two together.

One morning, the day before Christmas, Hetty was scrubbing the floor in one of the halls, and she was taking pains to do it very nicely, so that the superintendent would praise her work.

She was so busy in getting out all the spots, and bearing on the brush with all her strength, that she had not heard any footsteps near her; but some one exclaimed—

"Take care, little girl! Don't spoil my nice shoes!" and Hetty looked suddenly up.

A little boy, a few years younger than herself, very prettily dressed, with a little

cane in his hand, stood close by her, and seemed trying to get past the place where she was scrubbing. Hetty looked at him very hard, and then exclaimed—"Harry!" and let her brush fall in surprise.

"How did you know my name?" asked the little boy, as much surprised as herself.

A beautiful lady, who looked very much like Harry, now came toward them, talking to the superintendent; and as Hetty noticed her velvet cloak and rich bonnet with handsome feathers, she thought that she had never seen any thing so fine. The lady was very sweet-looking, and smiled so pleasantly as Hetty fixed her eyes upon her, that the little girl unconsciously stared for a long time.

"Harry," said she again, "don't you know me? Don't you remember the night that I took you home, and put you to sleep there in what you called such a queer bed?"

Mrs. Rogers, at first, looked very much surprised; but then she approached Hetty kindly, and said—

"Is it possible that you are the little girl who was so very kind to Harry? I am glad

that I have found you, for I have been trying to do so for a long time."

Mrs. Rogers stood looking at Hetty for a while, and was very much struck with her sweet expression; for the little girl felt so glad to see Harry again, that she looked perfectly happy, and knelt there on the floor, smiling at him, and noting the changes that two years had made.

Harry's mother talked to the superintendent for a long time; and they both looked at Hetty so often that she felt quite confused, and wondered if they were talking about her; but at length Mrs. Rogers said—

"Hetty, I have no little daughter—no child in the whole world but Harry; and as Mrs. Gobb tells me that you are an amiable, obedient little girl, I should like to have you live with me, and be my own child. Will you come?"

Hetty could scarcely believe her own ears. This beautiful, sweet-looking lady actually asking *her* to go home with her, and be her daughter and Harry's sister! She, who had never, in her whole life, known any thing but poverty and work—she must be dreaming!

She looked up at the superintendent in the utmost bewilderment, but Mrs. Gobb smiled encouragingly; and she turned again to Mrs. Rogers. The lady's sweet face seemed to have cast a spell over her; and she replied timidly—

"I should be very glad to go, ma'am—but —do you *really* want me?"

"I think so," replied Mrs. Rogers, smiling pleasantly; "and this little boy, I am sure, will be glad to have his old friend with him again."

But Harry stood gazing at Hetty in the utmost surprise, and wondered what it all meant. He could'nt remember the night that Hetty had thought of so often since; but he liked her looks very much, and was quite pleased at the idea of her going home with them.

Hetty left her scrubbing, and Mrs. Gobb went up-stairs with her, and selected the best of her clothes, which she put up neatly; and Hetty took care to lay the little plainly-bound Bible, which had been given her, in the parcel. All was soon ready; and Hetty was seated in Mrs. Rogers's handsome sleigh,

feeling very strange, and very much surprised to find herself there.

She enjoyed her ride very much—the first sleigh-ride she had ever taken; and after a while the sleigh stopped at a large, handsome-looking house, and Master Harry sprang up the steps, and rang the bell loudly. Hetty was quite bewildered by the size of the hall and the elegantly-furnished rooms; and wondered if she were not asleep and dreaming, and if the morning wouldn't find her in her own little bed at the Orphan's Asylum. She was quite as much surprised as Harry had been to find himself in her grandmother's little hut; and she gazed about on all the fine things, and wondered if there were many houses in the world as handsome as that.

Mrs. Rogers smiled as she saw Hetty's large bright eyes roving about from one thing to another, and she thought that she should soon love the little girl very dearly—almost as dearly as if she had been her own daughter.

Mrs. Rogers's husband was dead, and there was no one in that great house, beside the servants, except Harry and his mother; but little boys are not fond of staying in-doors

much, and Mrs. Rogers thought that she should not feel so lonely now, when Harry had gone out to play, for Hetty would be there to talk to, and she could teach her a great many things which the little girl would be very glad to learn.

A pleasant little room, that opened into Mrs. Rogers's dressing-room, was given to Hetty; and when she said her prayers that night—for she had been taught to pray and to read and write at the Orphan Asylum—she did not forget to thank her heavenly Father for the kind friends she had found, and to pray that she might try to deserve this kindness.

Two or three years passed on; and among the houses that Santa Claus visited on Christmas Eve, was one that looked too cheerful to be made any happier by presents.

A very sweet-looking lady sat in a large chair, while a tall boy of nine years old was leaning on the back of it, listening to some story that the lady was relating, while she glanced toward a smiling, graceful-looking girl, who was drawing at a small table, as if she loved her very much.

"And that is the way we found Hetty, is it?" said the boy, when his mother had concluded. "But I know that you have forgotten, mamma," he continued, "and that Hetty is really my sister—for how could we all love her so much if she wasn't? Don't you remember the day that she was born?"

Mrs. Rogers smiled, and our old friend, Hetty, laughed outright.

"Ah, Harry," said she, "it was sometime before *you* would remember any thing about me. I used to cry very often to think how you had forgotten me."

"Well," said Harry, "all that I want to remember *now* is that you are my own dear sister, and no one else shall ever have you!"

Hetty left her drawing and seated herself on a low bench at Mrs. Rogers's feet; and the lady stroked her shining hair as fondly as if the name of "mother," that Hetty whispered, had always been her right.

Three years had changed Hetty very much; and no one would have supposed that the tall, sweet-looking girl who seemed so perfectly at home among all those beautiful things, had ever been the inmate of an orphan asylum—

or, stranger still, a lonely, neglected child, with no friend but an old grandmother, and no food but that supplied by pitying charity.

Hetty had two motives for applying herself to study, and improving the many advantages that were now hers: her wish to please the kind lady who had adopted her, and her own strong desire to learn. She succeeded so well that Mrs. Rogers felt more than *pleased;* she was really grateful for the daughter that Providence had thrown in her way.

Hetty was not one to forget old friends; and the generous storekeeper who had given her that first Christmas dinner was so often spoken of that Mrs. Rogers went to see him herself, and ordered every thing from his shop that she happened to want; and very much surprised was he to find that he owed this new customer to the little girl upon whom he had taken pity on that Christmas morning.

A servant entered the parlor with several large boxes and parcels that had been left at the door; and while Hetty and Harry look to see what Santa Claus has brought them this time, we will take our leave of them.

THE GOLD-PIECE.

The snow had been falling lightly since two o'clock; and as it was now four, the short November day seemed nearly ended. The sidewalks were quite wet; and people hurried along to comfortable homes, with cloaks wrapped closely around them, and did not pause even at the call of those who had no cloaks to protect them. The man had commenced lighting the street-lamps; but he, too, seemed in a hurry, and closed the little glass doors with a bang, and snatched up his ladder, and was off like a shot.

Mrs. Middleton stood behind the folds of her lace curtains, and looked out into the dreary street. It was long past the usual hour, and yet the tread of little feet came not. They could have met with no accident on their way from school—the careful Sarah

would see to that; and yet they had never stayed so long. What could be the reason?

The anxious mother walked up and down the spacious room, and thought and wondered in vain; but, just as she was about to despatch Thomas in quest of them, the bell rang, merry voices were heard in the hall, and two bright, young faces, radiant with the damp air, peeped into the drawing-room.

"In one moment, dear mamma!" called out the little girl. "I have a great deal to tell you."

"Now, miss," said Thomas; and Carrie sat down on one of the hall-chairs to have her overshoes taken off. Thomas was very slow and neat, and *would* turn each shoe just so, and take it off in the most orderly manner.

"Pooh, Thomas! Look here!" called out Alfred, who was marching up and down the hall. "I can *kick* my shoes off, before you can get at me!" And as he spoke, first one shoe was flung violently on the marble pavement, and then the other.

"Oh, Alfred!" exclaimed Carrie, who, being two years older, thought herself called

upon to reprove her brother quite often, "That is not at all polite. I am afraid that you will never be ladylike."

"*Ladylike!*" said Alfred, with a loud laugh; "No, indeed! I would'nt be a *girl* for the whole world! Oh, mamma!" he continued, limping into the drawing-room, "I have sprained the *wrist* of my leg!"

Notwithstanding this infirmity, Master Alfred sprang toward his mamma, and treating her handsome lace collar in a very disrespectful manner, he gave her several wet kisses, and then stood laughing at the drowned appearance of his jacket and trousers.

Mrs. Middleton had long, brown curls, and was "the very prettiest young mamma in the whole school," as Alfred expressed it; and in spite of her handsome dress, the young gentleman now tumbled about very much at his ease.

"Sarah," said Mrs. Middleton, as Carrie appeared in the doorway, "why were you so late this afternoon? I sent you early, on purpose that the children might get home before the storm came on."

"And so we would, ma'am," replied Sarah hesitatingly, "but Miss Carrie wanted to stop."

"Why, Carrie!" exclaimed Mrs. Middleton, laughing, "surely, you have not been plaguing that poor woman again to-day!"

Carrie laughed too, as she replied—"Why not, mamma? Christmas is very near, now—only four weeks off: is'nt that *most* too good to be true? Besides, how can I think what is best to buy, unless I look at all the things?"

"But you should do the *thinking* at home," said her mother, "and not trouble the shopkeepers to show you their goods so many times."

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Alfred, "you just ought to see Carrie! She goes into Mrs. Roberts's store every day, and looks at all the cups and saucers, and rocks all the horses, and squeaks all the cats and things that make a noise, you know, and blows the trumpets, and measures all the dolls, and then tells Mrs. Roberts that she hasn't made up her mind yet, and that she is going to buy a great many things! And then Mrs.

Roberts puts them all away again, and looks as if she didn't expect Carrie to buy any."

"Very probably she does not," said Mrs. Middleton; and Carrie wondered why she laughed so.

"Well, now, mamma," said Carrie, very seriously, "suppose *you* were a little girl, just as old as I am, and you had one gold-piece, as I have, and thought that perhaps you would never have another, wouldn't *you* look a great deal, too?"

"Perhaps I might," replied her mother: "we never know what we will do."

"Don't we?" said Carrie. "That is queer. But I do wish," she continued, "that Mrs. Roberts wouldn't get so many *new* things in every day: just as I have made up my mind to take *one* thing, I see something else that looks prettier."

"Are you only going to get *one* thing?" asked Alfred in a disappointed tone. "I thought that you were going to make us *all* presents!"

"I am," replied Carrie, a little proudly. "I *hope* that I shouldn't think of spending five dollars all on myself!"

"How rich you are, Carrie!" exclaimed Alfred. "I wonder what is the reason that *I* never have no money?"

"*I* know why," said Carrie, somewhat triumphantly: "it is because you buy such foolish things as kites, and strings, and tops, and *chocolate*."

"Carrie," said Mrs. Middleton, "*I* heard of a little girl, once, who bought a whole pound of Stewart's candy."

"Yes," said Carrie, "but that was a great while ago, when I was quite little."

"Not so very much *littler* than you are now," replied her mother: "it was last spring, I believe."

Carrie looked somewhat confused, but she soon began to think of the approaching holidays.

"Not one of the girls in school has as much money as I have," said she: "they all say that they wouldn't know what to do with it."

"I know what you ought to do with it, Carrie," exclaimed Alfred suddenly.

"What?" asked his sister.

"Why," said he, "you ought to spend it

all in loaves of bread, and give them to poor people!"

Carrie looked quite distressed, and appealed to her mother.

"No," said Mrs. Middleton, "I do not think you *ought* to do any thing of the kind. This would do more real good than any other way of spending it, but you have a perfect right to do as you please with it; and you, Master Alfred, are remarkably charitable with other people's money."

Alfred laughed, and ran off in search of amusement, while his sister looked very well pleased with herself.

Carrie Middleton was at this time about ten years old; she was a well-disposed little girl, amiable and affectionate, but rather too fond of being praised, and, upon any opportunity for a display of goodness, very much inclined to "show off." Her brother Alfred was thoughtless, and much more apt to offend; but he was generous and unselfish, and looked up to Carrie with the most unbounded admiration. They lived in a fine house, and had every reasonable wish gratified; but they were so accustomed to

this that they scarcely realized the possibility of there being children who were less happily situated than themselves.

Carrie had been seated on the sofa beside her mother, chatting merrily of the approaching holidays, but she suddenly stopped, and looked quite frightened.

"It is only papa," said Mrs. Middleton, as a heavy step sounded in the hall.

But Carrie did not look as happy as usual when her father entered; and she seemed afraid to answer his questions. Mr. Middleton was tall and pleasant-looking; but he seemed much older than his wife, for his hair was quite gray.

"Now, papa," exclaimed Alfred, rushing in like the great, turbulent fellow that he was, "I am going to have a nice ride on your foot."

"No," replied his father quietly; "I prefer taking your sister, this time. Come here and sit on my knee, Carrie; I wish to talk to you."

Carrie did not come very quickly, and Mr. Middleton noticed her hesitation.

"Mamma says that you were very

late this afternoon," said he; "how was that?"

"I stopped to look at things," replied Carrie, in a low voice.

"Was that the *only* reason?" asked her father.

Carrie sat still for a few moments, and then burst into tears. Her mother looked up in surprise from the book she had been reading, and Mr. Middleton continued calmly—

"Tell me the other reason, Carrie."

"I was kept in," whispered Carrie, at length. Poor Carrie! This was a mortifying acknowledgment—she had so often worn the medal home in triumph; but her father replied with a smile—

"This business does not seem to me serious enough to cry so much about. Take care, Carrie! If you waste all your tears now, what will you do when next time comes? But tell me something more about this 'missing,'" he continued: "what was it that you missed?"

"My spelling-lesson," sobbed the little girl; "and you would have cried too, papa,

if you had been in my place. Miss Fidget is *so* cross! She wanted us to spell 'duty;' and what do you think she called it? '*Juty!*' One of the girls said 'j-u-t-y,' and another said 'j-o-o-t-y,' and I said 'j-u-i-t-y;' and she made us all stay in!"

To Carrie's great surprise, papa burst out laughing at her sorrows, and mamma too seemed very much amused.

"I think, Carrie, that you are very excusable for missing," said her father, as he surveyed her sorrowful face; "but why did my little girl attempt to deceive?"

"I didn't mean to *deceive*, papa," replied Carrie, now sobbing afresh; "but I was afraid that you would all laugh at me, and Sarah and Alfred promised not to tell."

"We were not laughing at your misfortunes," said Mr. Middleton, as he tried his best not to smile; "and I hope that if 'next time' ever comes, you will not hesitate to tell your best friends, instead of saying that *you stopped to look at things*."

"But, papa," exclaimed Carrie, quite earnestly, "I really did stop and look at a great many things!"

"I have no doubt that you did," replied her father, and Carrie wondered why he laughed so much again: "that five-dollar gold-piece has been burning in your pocket this long while."

"Papa," whispered Carrie, "what are you going to give *me* on Christmas?"

"How would you like something useful, this time?" asked Mr. Middleton very gravely. "A sheet of note-paper, perhaps, and a stick of sealing-wax?"

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed Carrie, who took every thing quite literally, "that would be *very* stingy for *you*, because you have a great deal more money than I have, and I am sure that *I* shouldn't give any one such a present as *that!* What *do* you think one of the girls bought to-day for her mother, mamma? Twelve sheets of paper, twelve envelopes, a little box of wafers, and a pair of garters!"

"Now, Carrie," said Mrs. Middleton, laughing, "are you quite sure that they were *garters?*"

"Yes, mamma, they really *were* garters—purple, tipped with red; the man offered all

the things for two shillings, and Sophy Bolton bought them."

Carrie now slipped down from her father's knee, and she and Alfred were soon snugly ensconced behind the heavy curtains, whispering together most mysteriously.

The five-dollar gold-piece had, as Mr. Middleton said, burned in Carrie's pocket for a long time; and numerous were the ways in which she had, at various times, concluded to dispose of it. She had lately begun to investigate the cost of things; and she was extremely surprised, and somewhat indignant, at the exorbitant prices that people presumed to ask for the articles that particularly struck her fancy. She was learning, by experience, that even five dollars will not buy every thing.

Her father had laughingly advised her to lay out the whole sum in roundhearts, in order to make the most of it; but whenever Mr. Middleton made such speeches, Carrie would say—"Now, let me see your eyes, papa," and then she would declare that he was laughing, although his mouth was perfectly straight. There was some danger of

the gold-piece remaining unspent over the holidays; and Alfred, in particular, was extremely uneasy at Carrie's slowness in coming to a decision.

"I know very well what *I* should do with it," said Alfred, "if it was mine: I should buy papa a pair of slippers, to be ready when his are worn out; and I should buy you a book, and Willie a puzzle, and mamma a whole pound of gum-drops."

"Why, that wouldn't be nice, at all!" said Carrie. "I want to give mamma something to remember me by, and how could she remember me after she had eaten the gum-drops?"

Alfred had not thought of that; and the whispering continued until dinner-time. The shutters had now been closed, and the rooms lit up, for the long winter evening had fairly begun.

After dinner, Mrs. Middleton went upstairs to see Willie; and the two children gathered around their papa, and seemed to be trying which could ask the most questions. Mrs. Middleton stepped very gently, as she entered the quiet room, and approached the

large crib; but a pair of great, black eyes were wide open, and the little boy called out—

"I am awake, mamma."

Willie had been sick ever since he was born, seven years ago: he had the spine-complaint, and would lie patiently on his back for hours; sometimes he was so ill that he could not sit up at all, but stayed there alone in his crib, while the rest were down stairs. Carrie and Alfred would often try to amuse him; but they were sometimes too noisy, and then Willie would rather be alone. But he loved to have his mother come and lie down on the bed that stood beside his crib, and tell him stories; and there were some, in particular, that he would ask for until he knew them by heart.

Mrs. Middleton now kissed him softly, as she whispered: "What shall it be, Willie?"

"'The White Lamb,' mamma;" I like to hear that when there's snow upon the ground."

There was no light in Willie's room; but the moonbeams stole in through the curtains and fell on Mrs. Middleton's dress, and

showed the pair of earnest eyes that were listening so intently to the story of

"THE WHITE LAMB."

"A little boy, who was not always so obedient to his kind parents as he should have been, wandered from home one afternoon, and walked on in a strange road until he became quite weary and wished to return. But the more he tried to find his way back, the more bewildered he felt; and at last he sat down on a large stone and cried.

"He had gone into the woods, and the tall trees were all around him, and the wild-flowers growing at his feet; but he could find no path. Even the strawberries that he had gathered now lost their charm; and he trampled them on the ground and stamped on them, while he cried out loud. But no one came. The wind murmured among the trees, and sometimes he thought that he heard voices, but no footsteps sounded near; and he began to wish that he had not run away from home. He was tired out, and laid himself down on the ground with his head against a tree.

"A long time passed; when, suddenly, a white lamb stood beside him. It looked at him steadily and sorrowfully; and the boy thought that it seemed to pity him.

"'Oh, take me home!' he exclaimed, 'Show me the way home again, and I will keep you and feed you every day.'

"The lamb walked forward a little, and then looked back for the boy to follow him. He got up, and walked wherever the lamb went; but, presently, they left the pleasant woods, and entered a long lane that was very narrow, and had no pretty flowers growing near it. The boy drew back, and wished to go through the woods again; but the lamb stood perfectly still, and seemed to say—'You can't get home that way.' Then they went on; but the child was very tired, and the sharp stones hurt his feet.

"They came to a great field of snow; and the lamb plunged into it, and looked at the boy to make him follow. It was very deep, almost up to his neck, and he got benumbed with the cold; but the lamb went on very quickly as though they were almost there,

and the child plunged after as well as he could.

"At last he saw the end of the field; there were beautiful trees beyond it, and flowers, and fountains; while a great many children were singing and playing, and older people walked around, and every one seemed happy and contented. The boy saw his own father and mother; and when he had got fairly into this beautiful place, they ran toward him, and told him that it was much pleasanter than their own home, and that now he could never get lost any more.

"His father took him up in his arms, when he awoke—for he had been dreaming all this time—and found that John, one of his father's domestics, whom he liked very much, had really taken him up in his arms while he was asleep, and was now carrying him home.

"They were all so glad to see him, and had suffered so much on his account, that the boy resolved not to be so disobedient and troublesome again. But he did not tell them about his lamb yet.

"When the flowers had all faded, and the

bare trees rustled drearily in the winter wind, and the beautiful thick grass was covered with snow, the child was lying on his little bed, and tossing wearily around to find a soft, cool spot. They had darkened the windows and closed the doors, for he was very sick; and nearly all the time some one sat watching him, to bathe his hot brow and give him a cooling drink.

"But one evening the boy awoke from a troubled sleep, and the moon was shining brightly in through the parted curtains, and the nurse had gone down to her tea. He was quite alone, and he lay there thinking; but every thing seemed strange and unreal, and his head throbbed badly. He thought of that summer afternoon in the woods, and his dream about the white lamb; and then he got up and looked out of the window. And when he saw the snow, and the icicles hanging around, he seemed to see the lamb again; and thought that he must follow it, as he had done in his dream.

"The poor child did not know what he was doing, for he was quite delirious; but he wrapped himself in the coverlet, and went

very softly down stairs. Nobody saw him, and no one heard his quiet footsteps; but when they came to his room and found the bed empty, they were very much frightened, and commenced looking all through the house for him. He was nowhere to be found.

"But some one, who had seen some object from the window lying in the snow, went down into the garden; and there he was, lying beside a snow-man that his brother had made; for the boy thought that this was his lamb.

"They brought him into the house, but he was very cold indeed; and when the doctor came, he shook his head and looked extremely grave; but the boy was asleep, and he did not open his eyes until the next morning. The first thing that he asked about was his lamb; but they could not understand what he meant.

"Instead of dying, as the doctor had prophesied, he grew better rapidly; and when he felt strong enough to talk so much, he told his mother all about the lamb, and how he should like to have one, he said, 'for his very own.'

"One day, a pretty little lamb, with a blue ribbon around its neck, was placed on his bed; and the boy watched, and tended, and fed it, and became so fond of it that he could not bear to have it out of his sight.

"That boy was afterward a great and good man; and he has often told me the story of 'The White Lamb.'"

"Then, it is really *true*, mamma?" exclaimed Willie, while his great bright eyes seemed growing larger and brighter—"every single bit of it true?"

"Not 'every single bit of it,' perhaps," replied Mrs. Middleton, laughing at Willie's earnestness. "I dare say that I have told it somewhat differently; but the person who told it to me was the very little boy himself."

"*I* know who that person was," said Carrie, for both she and Alfred had slipped quietly in while their mother was talking: "it was mamma's uncle—and he was a clergyman, and a very good man."

"Is he dead?" asked Willie.

"Yes," replied his mother; "he died a great many years ago."

"He ought to have died *then*," said Willie, who often made strange speeches—"that night, when he went out in the snow to look for the lamb."

"Oh, Willie!" exclaimed Carrie, "how very wicked!"

"No," said Willie, "it isn't wicked a bit, for he ought to have died then."

"Now, darling," whispered Mrs. Middleton, "are you ready to go to sleep?"

"No, mamma," replied the child quietly; "I am not 'ready to go to sleep;' but I am ready to have you all go and leave me. I am not afraid."

"You will soon be asleep," said his mother, as she kissed him "good night."

Willie said his prayers; and after another kiss, Mrs. Middleton left the room with Carrie and Alfred. But Willie's eyes remained as wide open as ever; and he was lying there a long time, quite awake, thinking of the boy and his white lamb.

Eight o'clock had struck, and Carrie and Alfred walked up to the nursery. Her brother was soon in bed; but Carrie was almost as slow and particular as Thomas;

and even after her clothes had all been hung up, her teeth brushed, and her prayer-book read, she sat down in her night-dress by the nursery-fire, and held a long conversation with Sarah.

Alfred was sound asleep; and as Sarah had been in the family some time, she felt interested in whatever interested the children.

"Sarah," asked Carrie, suddenly, "are you not glad that Christmas is so near?"

"I suppose so," replied Sarah, who was fitting a difficult piece of sewing.

"You *suppose* so!" repeated Carrie in amazement. "Why, I should think you would be just ready to jump out of your skin at the very idea! *I* am."

Sarah smiled very quietly, and did not seem at all inclined to do any thing of the sort.

"It is quite troublesome to have so much money," said Carrie in an important manner. "I really don't know what to buy with it. Suppose, Sarah," she continued, as she sat rubbing her nose across the brass fender that was placed in front of the fire, "suppose that some one thought, just a very little bit,

of making you a present—not that *I* mean to; but if some one did—what had you rather have than any thing else?"

"Well," said Sarah, "I think that I would like a silver thimble. Just see what a mark this brass one has left on my finger!"

"Why, *I* should think," said Carrie, "that you would choose a nice little watch; then you could always tell what time it was."

"Yes," replied Sarah, "so I could; but as it isn't likely that any one will give me a watch, I had better think of a thimble."

"But what makes you think that any one is going to give you a thimble?" asked Carrie, quite suspiciously.

"I don't think so," replied Sarah; "I only spoke of a thimble because I should like one."

"Well," said Carrie, with a very knowing look, "if I hear of any one that wishes to make you a present, I'll tell them about a thimble."

"Very well," replied Sarah, and she bent

down low over her sewing, that Carrie should not see her smile.

After reflecting a little while longer, Carrie concluded to go to bed; and she fell asleep, thinking what a nice present a thimble would be for Sarah, and how it would surprise her to get it!

The next morning was beautifully clear and cold; and Mr. Middleton told Carrie that he would take them to school on his way to the office.

"I am going to see old Aunty Sanderson," said he to his wife, "and I will take the children with me."

"Do," replied Mrs. Middleton; "and pray see that the poor thing is supplied with fuel, and all necessary comforts, this cold weather. It is very hard for the poor; they feel it so much more when those who have money are making merry for the holidays."

Carrie thought it very strange that *any* one should be sad now; and she pon-

dered on her mother's words as they went along.

The children were all in a glow, as they danced about with the keen winter air blowing upon them; and they would take a hop, skip, and jump, and then wait for papa to come up to them, and then dance on again, until they were quite wild with spirits. But Carrie, you may be sure, did not pass the stores without a good look in the windows; and had papa given her the least encouragement, she would have gone in and priced nearly the whole stock, as usual.

But Mr. Middleton had no time to spare: the visit to Aunty Sanderson must be paid; and, as they turned from the broad, handsome street in which they had been walking to one that was narrow and dull-looking, the children began to murmur at its unpromising appearance.

"Carrie," said her father, "where do you suppose that we are going?"

"To visit a poor woman," she replied; "are we not, papa?"

"Such is my intention, certainly," replied

Mr. Middleton. "But did you expect this poor woman to live in a fine street, with handsome stores around her?"

"No, indeed!" shouted Alfred; "she lives in a pen!"

"In a *pen!*" repeated his father, laughing. "Why, what put that idea into your head? She is not an animal."

"Well," replied Alfred, "if she is poor, she *does* live in a pen; because I heard a gentleman say, the other day, that 'poor people lived like pigs,' and I am sure *they* live in a pen!"

Mr. Middleton laughed heartily at Alfred's earnestness; but Carrie seemed quite distressed.

"I don't believe that the gentleman was quite in earnest; do you, papa?" said she; "because if he was, I would rather not go there, for my dress will not be fit for school."

"Not quite," replied her father; "for Aunty Sanderson certainly does not live in a pen; and I never heard of any person that did. By 'living like pigs,' the gentleman meant that poor people had very few

more comforts than animals; and it is indeed so; but the animals can do very well without them."

"Papa," asked Carrie, quite reflectively, "don't you think that people should always be very careful to say exactly what they mean, so as not to make mistakes?"

"When they are speaking to children, they certainly should," replied Mr. Middleton, as he reflected how negligent most people were in this respect; "particularly such very literal ones as you and Alfred."

"Now, papa," said Carrie, "what does 'literal' mean?"

"That is just what we have been speaking of," replied her father—"taking every thing just as it is said, without stopping to think how improbable it is. When you understand French better, Carrie, you will know what is meant by '*au pied du lettre*,' a favourite expression for taking things literally."

Carrie wished that she knew just how much room there was in her head, and whether it would hold all the things that were expected to go into it; she was sure

that it would be necessary to stow them very closely together

Alfred made a comical face, and placed his little handkerchief to his nose.

"Papa," exclaimed Carrie, "I don't think there is a very pleasant smell here!"

"No," replied Mr. Middleton; "it is not here that mamma's nice cologne-water is manufactured, and it certainly does remind one of a pig-pen."

Alfred's belief in the truth of his theory respecting poor people was again established; and he walked on, quite confident that they would, at last, enter a regular pen.

"Burnett's Court," read Carrie, as they entered a kind of arched doorway; "what does that mean, papa?"

"I believe that is the name of the man who owns the buildings," replied her father; "and here we are at Aunty Sanderson's."

They had passed white people and coloured, all mixed together, and little dirty children were gathered around the doors. Mr. Middleton walked up to a low house, that looked too small to contain more than

one room; and having knocked at the door, the latch was soon lifted, and the children saw the much talked-of Aunty Sanderson.

She was a clean-looking old woman, and wore what Carrie thought a very funny cap: the great, wide ruffles were starched up straight, and the high crown seemed rising up to meet them. She was a Scotch-woman; and the children thought it so strange that she should call them "bairns!"

"Walk in, sir," said she to Mr. Middleton, "if ye and the bairns—blessings on their bonnie faces!—can sit down in so poor a place."

The room looked very neat, and Carrie thought that it would be a grand place for a regular baby-house. In one corner, there were a few lumps of coal, that were fenced in by a piece of board; and an old, patched quilt covered a small bed, that the children did not think very inviting, to sleep in.

"Now, aunty," said Mr. Middleton, "let me hear how you are off for provisions."

"Well, sir," said she, "I won't deceive you: there's just two potatoes and a crust of bread in the closet."

Mr. Middleton took a pencil and a piece of paper from his pocket-book, and said, as he began to write—

"Barrel of flour—bushel of potatoes—tea: you are fond of a cup of tea, Aunty?"

"Indeed I am, sir!" replied the old woman; "but you're too kind to think of *every thing*."

"I want you to have a holiday, too," said Mr. Middleton, "when Christmas comes;" and having added to his list sugar, butter, and salt-meat, he asked her about fuel.

"Well," said aunty, "I havn't had much coal this long time; but the carpenters let me pick up a few blocks and shavings, and I get along pretty well."

Mr. Middleton knew that the poor old woman's "pretty well" was just to keep from freezing; and he put down half a ton of coal.

"Do you hear any thing of Susan?" said he.

The old woman shook her head sorrowfully. "I am afraid that I shall never see her again," she replied; "she doesn't care for her old grandmother and her poor ways."

Carrie slipping her gold piece into Aunty Sanderson's hand.—*Page* 65.

"I hope that she is safe!" said Mr. Middleton.

"Yes," replied Aunty Sanderson, "I think that she is in some service-place: she always said that she meant to go to one."

After asking a few more questions, Mr. Middleton took leave of the old woman; but Carrie lingered behind her father, and slipping her five-dollar gold-piece into Aunty Sanderson's hand, she ran out of the door.

The old woman's eyes fairly glistened at sight of the gold; and thinking it a gift from Mr. Middleton, she invoked numerous blessings on his head as she wrapped it up carefully in the toe of an old stocking.

Mr. Middleton had seen the action, but he resolved to say nothing about it yet; and Carrie walked on pretty quietly, thinking that she had done a very excellent deed.

"Papa," said Alfred, "who is 'Susan?'"

"She is Aunty Sanderson's grand-daughter," replied his father. "The old woman took care of her when she was a little child; and now, when the old grandmother needs care herself, this girl has deserted her."

"What a very bad girl she must be!"

exclaimed Carrie, in a burst of indignation. "I am sure that I should hate the very sight of her!"

"That would be very wrong," replied her father; "because this girl has not fulfilled her duty to her grandmother, you have no right to hate her. She may have had great temptations, or she may not have been properly brought up; perhaps, in her situation, you would not have behaved any better."

Carrie felt very sure that *she* could not be so wicked; but she did not tell her father so, and walked on quite thoughtfully to school.

Before they were dismissed for the day, Miss Fidget informed them that she thought it a good plan to take up a collection in the school for the blind old coloured man who stood out by the door nearly every pleasant morning. "Each one could give a little," she said; "and, as the old man was very poor, it would be quite an assistance to him."

Carrie looked confused, as she thought of her five-dollar gold-piece; but when she

heard one of the girls whisper, "Carrie Middleton, I dare say, will give more than any of the rest of us—she has so much money," she fairly burst into tears. She thought how much she should have liked to help the poor old blind man, and wondered if she had not been rather hasty in giving all her money to Aunty Sanderson.

The girls were all surprised at her evident distress; but when the box was passed to her, and nothing was put into it, their astonishment increased. Miss Fidget was rather stern; and the expression of her face was pretty severe, as she observed—

"I am afraid, Carrie, that when you are spending so much money for your own gratification, you will think that a little of it might have kept a poor old man from starving or freezing."

Carrie did not deserve this reproof; but she made no reply, and felt very miserable during the rest of the day.

"Why, Carrie," exclaimed her mother, as the children made their appearance at an earlier hour than usual, "I am afraid that you have forgotten Mrs. Roberts to-day?"

This remark caused a fresh burst of tears.

"No, mamma, I did not *forget;* but—but—I have no money, *now.*"

"Why, surely, you have not lost it!" exclaimed her mother; "I told you how careless it was to carry it around with you so much."

"No," replied Carrie, a little proudly, "I have not lost it; I gave it to a poor woman."

"But not *all* of it?" said her mother. "Surely, you did not give all that you had to one person!"

"Why, mamma," said Carrie, rather doubtfully, "you have always told me that people ought to be charitable."

"So they should," replied Mr. Middleton, who had just entered the room; "but let us see how far charity should extend. To-day, Carrie, a poor old soldier came down to my office. He was just out of the hospital, had lost an arm and a leg, and did not know where to look for any means of support. I felt very sorry for him, and gave him five dollars."

"Well, papa," said Carrie, somewhat relieved, "that is just what I gave Aunty Sanderson."

"It was the same *amount*," replied her father, "but not the same thing. Suppose that, instead of giving this poor soldier five dollars, I had given him all the money I had; would that have been charitable, or foolish?"

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed Carrie, "it would have been very foolish, indeed; because, then, you would have had no money for mamma or any of us!"

"So *I* think," said Mr. Middleton; "and you did just as foolish a thing this morning. It makes no difference whether the sum was five dollars or fifty; it was all that you had, and therefore you could not afford to part with it."

"I declare," exclaimed Carrie, "it is really too bad! Now I shall have no money to spend for Christmas! I wish that I had not gone to see Aunty Sanderson, or given her any money at all!"

"Carrie," said her father, in a calm tone that quieted her at once, "whose *fault* was

it that you parted with all your money? Did Aunty Sanderson ask you for it, or did I tell you to give it? The best way would have been to change your gold-piece, and give Aunty Sanderson half-a-dollar; you could afford that, and you would then have had money left for other things."

Carrie was perfectly quiet, for she could not help thinking this advice very sensible; but she felt quite mournful to think that she could now buy no present for papa, or mamma, or her brother, or even Sarah's thimble.

Alfred tried to console her, and told her that it was no matter about *him*, and that *he* thought it was very good of her to give her money to Aunty Sanderson; but Carrie thought that she had been very foolish, and that if she ever had another gold-piece, she would be very prudent indeed.

Mr. Middleton sat talking to his wife, after the children had gone up to the nursery, about Carrie's thoughtlessness in disposing of her money; but her father wished to try her again, and proposed offering a reward, that Carrie would be likely to win. Mrs.

Middleton thought this a very good plan; and papa declared, the next morning, that if a certain little girl wore home the medal next week, he would give her another five-dollar gold-piece.

Carrie was both industrious and persevering; and, anxious to retrieve her lost reputation for wisdom and prudence, she toiled unremittingly, and resisted every temptation to transgress the rules of good-behaviour and attention. On Friday afternoon she came dancing home, in triumph, with the medal around her neck; and Mr. Middleton placed in her hand a bright five-dollar gold-piece, that looked exactly like the old one back again.

"Now, Carrie," said her father, "let me see that you are fit to be trusted with money;" and Carrie felt very proud, as she thought that even papa would now admire her good sense.

One afternoon, Carrie sat by Willie's crib, trying to amuse him. She went very much

by fits and starts; but, when she gave her whole attention to the matter, she was very apt to succeed, and Willie liked to have her with him.

She had now been there two or three hours; and had fitted together all the puzzles, and arranged all the trees and houses belonging to the villages that came in boxes, and placed all the animals of the Noah's Ark two and two together, and wound up the woman that stood on a piece of green board feeding chickens; and now there was nothing more to be done.

"I'm tired of all these old things," said Willie, giving them a push.

"Are you?" said Carrie, as a bright idea entered her head. "Would you like to have something new?—something very curious?"

"Yes, indeed!" replied Willie, who liked all sorts of queer toys. "What is it?"

"Why," replied Carrie, almost under her breath, "the other day, when I was coming from school, I saw the cunningest little stove, with a grate, and pipe, and all! And a place to make the fire, just like a large

stove, and a little oven to bake in, and pots and kettles, and even a little frying-pan belonging to it!"

"Oh!" said Willie, "how I *should* like to have it!"

"Should you?" replied his sister, as she looked quite contemptuously upon the play-things they had been arranging.

Carrie walked to the window, and stood looking out for a few moments, as she reflected upon the propriety of making the contemplated purchase. But what child—or grown person, either—ever fully decided to do a thing, that they did not find abundant reasons why it was both natural and proper to do it? Carrie reasoned thus: "Willie is my brother, and he is sick; therefore, I *ought* to do every thing that I can to give him pleasure. This money is my own, I *earned* it; therefore, I have a right to spend it. Willie is tired of these old things, and will be delighted with the stove; besides, it will not take *all* my gold-piece to buy it, and I can spend the rest very sensibly."

But while Carrie stood talking to herself, something whispered to her: "It will be

very *generous* of you to buy this stove for Willie, and Alfred will say, How good you are! and you can tell everybody what you did with your money. It will *sound* well."

"Now, Willie," said his sister, as she bent over his crib, "will you promise to be very still until I come back, and not tell any one where I have gone?"

"Yes," whispered Willie, in the same low tone; "for I know that you are going to buy me that little stove. Mamma has gone out herself, and taken Alfred with her, so that no one will see you. But *do* make haste! Perhaps some one else has bought it!"

There was snow on the ground; but Carrie was in such a hurry to secure the treasure that she forgot her overshoes, and her little feet were wet, even to the ankles. On she ran, until, quite out of breath, she reached the window that contained the stove; and, having spent just half her gold-piece, she hastened back to Willie.

It was really a very pretty and ingenious toy; and the sick little boy sat up in his

crib, and looked at it with delight and admiration. He uncovered all the pots; he opened the little oven, and examined the grate with the utmost interest. Carrie felt abundantly repaid for her trouble, and even for the twenty shillings she had spent.

Willie amused himself with his new toy for a long time; then he wished to try an experiment.

"Carrie," said he, suddenly, "why don't you make a fire in this stove? See! It would burn. We might bake something, too," he added, after another examination of the oven.

Carrie sprang up and clapped her hands—a favourite habit of her's when any thing pleased her very much—and the next moment she was taking from her writing-desk a little box of tapers, which her kind mamma had provided for her convenience.

"Now," said Willie, "if we only had a *real* little axe, and some *real* little logs of wood to chop, wouldn't it be nice? If *I* made toys, I am sure I should make a great deal better ones than people keep in stores."

Carrie thought so too; but, instead of the axe, she brought a small knife; and for wood she cut up a piece of board that belonged to one of the puzzles. Having twisted up some small bits of paper, the stove was placed in a convenient position on Willie's bed; and the children filled up the bottom of the grate with paper, and laid some very thin pieces of wood, like jackstraws, in next, and on top of this they put what they called "fagots"—some thicker pieces of board that were intended to represent logs of wood. At last, one of the tapers was lit, and the whole set on fire.

Willie shouted in triumph as the flames curled up, just like a *real* fire; and even Carrie thought it a beautiful sight. As fast as it burned they put on more wood; and then Carrie concluded to make some cake. She went down stairs to the cook, and asked for a little sugar, and butter, and flour, and a few currants; and having taken a cup to mix it in, she went back to Willie.

But when she opened the door, there was a suffocating smell in the room, and the crib

was almost enveloped in smoke. Willie had upset the stove, in turning to get a better view of it, and the flames were spreading rapidly over the white coverlet. The child begged to be taken out; and Carrie, who was very much frightened, pulled with all her might at the bell that hung near his crib, and then rang nearly all the other bells in the house.

The servants ran to all the different rooms where the bells belonged; but Sarah opened the door where the two terrified children were screaming loudly, and snatched Willie from the flames, which had now reached his night-dress. Even his skin was scorched; and Carrie's pretty curls were so badly singed that she remembered her attempted baking for some time.

"What *is* the matter?" exclaimed Mrs. Middleton, as she ran towards Willie. "Is my child dying?"

"No, ma'am," replied Sarah; "he isn't much hurt; but he and Miss Carrie have been playing with fire, and you see that Master Willie's coverlet is quite burned up."

"Oh, Carrie," exclaimed her mother, "are you *never* to be trusted? How often I have told you not to play with fire!"

But Carrie's singed hair presented such a woful appearance, that Mrs. Middleton almost feared to examine into the extent of the injuries received. In the confusion, Carrie escaped to the nursery; and there she remained with Alfred until the dinner-bell rang.

When she went down-stairs, she tried to avoid her father's eye; but Mr. Middleton had caught a glimpse of her very irregular-looking curls, and immediately exclaimed—

"Why, Carrie, what has happened to your curls? Has Alfred been *biting* them off?"

"No, papa," she replied in a low tone of voice, looking just ready to cry.

Her father said nothing more *then;* but Carrie quite dreaded to have dinner over. The dessert had been placed upon the table, and Thomas went down stairs to his own dinner.

"Now, Carrie," said Mr. Middleton, as he handed her a bunch of grapes, "let me

hear how that great fire up-stairs originated, before I read an account of it in the paper."

"Oh, papa," exclaimed Carrie, in distress, "do you really believe that they will put it in the paper? And how I bought the stove, and all?"

"No," replied her father, laughing, "I do not believe any such thing."

Carrie looked relieved; but she still seemed very much at a loss how to begin.

"The beginning," said Mr. Middleton, "is the best place to commence at. What happened first?"

"First, Willie said that he wanted the stove."

"'Willie said that he wanted the stove?'" repeated her father. "When did Willie ever hear of the stove?"

"I told him about it," said Carrie, in a lower voice.

"Then you should have said that first you excited Willie's curiosity by wonderful descriptions of this little stove, and he very naturally desired to see it. What next?"

"Then I put on my things, and went out and bought it."

"*Alone!*" exclaimed her mother. "I hope, Carrie, that you remembered to wear your overshoes?"

"No, mamma, I forgot them," replied Carrie, in a most mournful voice.

"But why did you tell no one of this grand scheme?" inquired her father.

"Because I was afraid that I would be kept at home," replied Carrie; "and then Willie would not get the stove."

"Exactly," replied her father. "Mamma would probably have told you that it was a foolish thing to buy, and dissuaded you from the idea; and I should have said the very same thing. What happened next?"

"Then Willie wanted to make a fire in it," continued Carrie, now fairly sobbing; "and I got all the things ready, and went down to mix some cake for mamma; but when I came back—"

"Willie was on fire," said her father; "and you felt very sorry that you had bought the little stove. How much did it cost?" he asked.

"It didn't cost but half of my gold-piece," replied Carrie; "but I put the change in my pocket, and there must have been a hole in it, for it is all gone."

"That is your *second* gold-piece," said Mr. Middleton. "Ah, Carrie! I am afraid that Christmas will find you as poor as ever!"

Carrie sat there crying, and making herself look quite dismal, as she wished that she had never seen the stove; but her father told her she had better wish that she had been sensible enough not to act without the advice of some older person, and that she must not be so anxious to be thought generous.

"Do you think, papa, that I *am* anxious to be thought generous?" asked Carrie.

"Yes," replied Mr. Middleton, "I do think so. I think that was the reason of your giving all your money to Aunty Sanderson, and I am sure that it has led you into all to-day's difficulties. Why, Carrie," he continued, "you are not *always* so anxious to please Willie. Yesterday, I heard him ask you to read to him, and you said—

not in a very pleasant tone—'Oh, Willie! I *can't*,' although, after that, you did nothing for a long time but look out of the window."

Carrie looked very much ashamed, and her father said: "Do you know, Carrie, what your conduct to Willie reminds me of?"

Carrie did not seem very anxious to hear; but Mr. Middleton continued—

"It reminds me of a rich man who had a large bill, equal to a great deal of money, that he locked up very carefully, and would seldom let any one see. This man had a brother, whom he loved very much—so much that he would have *given* him this bill, had he ever asked for it; but the brother did not like to ask for so much, although he often wanted *small* sums of money; but the merchant always said that it was too much trouble to give him these small sums, though they were just in his pocket, and then thought his brother very ungrateful to be displeased, because he would have been willing to give him so large a bill. A sick little brother, like Wil-

lie, often wants small change—for he likes to be read to, and have some one to play with—but it does him more harm than good to spend *gold-pieces* for him."

Carrie hung her head still lower, and wondered if she ever *would* be good and sensible. It seemed *so* hard.

But the worst of Carrie's performance, as far as concerned herself, was yet to come. The next morning she awoke with a sore throat, that grew rapidly worse. Her voice was so husky that it could scarcely be heard, and she had evidently taken a severe cold by going in the snow without her overshoes.

"Carrie," said her mother, as she bent tenderly over her, "don't you think it best, *now*, for little girls to consult their parents before they undertake such very dangerous things?"

"Yes, mamma," was the reply, so very low that it sounded like a whisper.

Before night, the doctor was sent for; and as the days passed on, poor Carrie wondered if there ever would be an end to the bitter doses that she was obliged to take. Some-

times she thought that the very worst things were selected on purpose to punish her; but I do not believe that she would have called the best of medicines *good.*

When she was able to sit up, papa was constantly asking her if she had baked any more cake lately; but such questions always made her feel more like crying than laughing, and Mr. Middleton would kindly talk of something else. Willie was not much hurt by the fire in his crib; but he had had quite enough of the little stove, and the troublesome plaything was placed far out of reach, on a high shelf that was especially appropriated to cast-off toys.

The holidays were drawing very near; and every day came the same question from Carrie: "Papa, do you think that I shall be well by Christmas?" and papa would shake his head, and say very gravely, "That being sick was the only thing that kept Carrie out of mischief."

But Carrie had privately asked the doctor this important question, and *he* said "Yes," and smiled very pleasantly; and Carrie thought that, although papa *did* know so

very much, the doctor ought to know more about sickness.

Christmas came, at last; and you may be sure that the little Middletons had a very pleasant time of it. Poor little children, who go about begging a crust from door to door, and scarcely know what Santa Claus means, would have thought that a whole toy-shop had been emptied into the room where their presents were collected on Christmas-morning. Kind parents, who had plenty of money, had been arranging pleasant surprises for them ever since Christmas had been first talked about, and every one now discovered the very things they had most wanted.

Willie had said that he liked those tied-up horns, full of candy, so that he could search out and guess what was inside, without knowing beforehand, and one of the very largest of these horns was laid beside his stocking. It was tied with blue ribbons, and had several handsome pictures

and a great deal of gilding on the sides, and looked so very pretty that it was a long time before Willie would venture to open it, for fear of spoiling it. He had several pretty little books, and some new puzzles, and a set of picture-letters, and was extremely delighted with the treasures that he constantly discovered.

Alfred found himself in possession of a complete little printing-press, and a pair of handsome skates; and was so overjoyed at sight of these things that he scarcely thought of looking for any more.

Carrie had a great many boxes and parcels, which she opened very slowly and carefully. The first thing that she took out was a beautifully-bound book, and when she had removed the white paper that covered it, she found lying on it a five-dollar gold-piece. On the fly-leaf was written—"Carrie Middleton, with a father's best wishes for her improvement;" and when she looked at the title of the book, she saw, in large gilt letters: "The History of Two Gold-pieces; or, Which is the most Generous?" Carrie blushed, as she wondered how papa

had happened to find *that* for her; but she resolved to read it carefully through, and hoped that it would do her a great deal of good.

A large wax-doll, with *real* curls and beautifully dressed, was lying in a white box, and Carrie knew that this was one of mamma's presents. A complete suit of clothes accompanied Miss Dolly; and when it was found that these would go off and on, and fasten just like large ones, the children were very much pleased.

But when Willie asked to be allowed "to nurse it," Carrie's eyes grew very large and surprised; and as she caught a glance from her father, she wondered if he could call this "small change." It seemed to *her* like giving the whole, long bill. Having arranged Willie's arms like two wooden bars, she ordered him not to move, and laid the doll there for about ten minutes. Carrie thought that this ought to satisfy him; but Willie gave a long-drawn sigh when the doll was replaced in its box, and looked after it with very longing eyes.

Among the other presents, there was a

pretty box that seemed to be filled with cotton; but when Carrie had taken out some of this, she found little cups and saucers of the purest white china, with deep gilt rims, and a little coffee-pot, and every thing to match.

"That," said Mrs. Middleton, "is a present from Sarah; and I am really sorry that she has spent so much money on it, for it is a very expensive toy. I have already given her a 'Christmas-box;' but on New Year's day, I shall give you something to hand her yourself, Carrie."

"That would be very nice, mamma," replied Carrie, thoughtfully; "but I should like a great deal better to buy it myself, and with my own money: it would seem so much more like *my* giving it."

Mrs. Middleton reflected for a few moments, and then she said: "I think, Carrie, that you have now had *experience* enough to be trusted; and I have no doubt that Sarah would be more pleased with a present that you had bought yourself. If you will promise to follow my directions, I will send Thomas with you, and let me see if this

third time you can give a good account of your gold-piece."

Carrie willingly promised, and really *intended* to be very obedient, and Mrs. Middleton rang the bell for Thomas. The selection of the present was left entirely to Carrie's judgment, and she tripped off in high glee.

Thomas could scarcely be said to *accompany* her, for he walked at so moderate a pace that he was generally about a block behind; and Carrie would stop a moment to wait for him, and then run on again as fast as ever.

Mrs. Middleton had told Carrie to go to "the bazaar," a large store where they kept a great many beautiful things, and where the Middletons were well known; but when Carrie reached the place, she found it shut up. In despair, she turned to Thomas, who had by this time crawled up to her.

Thomas told her that there was a store around the corner, where they kept a great many things, and perhaps she could find something there to suit her. The cloud passed from Carrie's brow, and she walked

around the block without a thought that she was not following her mother's directions. The store that Thomas spoke of was kept by Jews, and was quite large and showy-looking. Carrie went in, and asked the price of their silver thimbles.

"One dollar," they replied, after examining the child from head to foot.

"Then," said Carrie, "they can't be silver, because silver ones are never more than four shillings," and she turned to leave the shop.

"Perhaps the young lady would like a *gold* thimble?" said a dark-looking man with heavy whiskers: "we have gold ones for two dollars."

Carrie stopped a moment, and thought a gold thimble would certainly be a very handsome thing for Sarah, and would be nearer the value of the present she had given Carrie. She turned back again.

When the box of thimbles was placed before her, she thought them the brightest-looking gold ones that she had ever seen; and having selected one that seemed likely to fit Sarah, she handed the man her five-

dollar gold-piece, and stood waiting for the change. There appeared to be some trouble about getting this, and considerable whispering; but at length a bill was handed across the counter, and Carrie tripped home again. Thomas had stood outside the door while Carrie was making her purchase; and the people in the store thought that she was entirely alone.

As soon as Carrie reached home, she ran to her mother's room to relate her adventures. Mrs. Middleton did not look pleased to hear about the Jew store; but when the thimble was produced, she exclaimed, at once, that they were cheats.

Poor Carrie had looked so pleased at the idea of what she had done, that Mr. Middleton tried not to laugh, and took up the bill they had given her in change; but as soon as he saw it, he pronounced it a counterfeit, and told Carrie that her thimble was only galvanized. This, he told her, was a kind of process by which things were dipped in gold, which gave them a particularly bright appearance.

Carrie did not look in the least galvan-

ized herself, for her face was any thing but *bright;* but Mr. Middleton took the thimble and the three-dollar bill, and calling Thomas to show him the place, he went directly back to the store. The people were very much frightened, and returned the gold-piece at once; but Mr. Middleton knew them to be notoriously dishonest, and they were taken before a magistrate, and made to give up a great deal of money of which they had defrauded others.

The next day, Carrie went out with her mother, and bought Sarah a very nice thimble, and spent the rest of her money in sensible presents for all the family; but for a long time she was afraid to buy any thing without her mother, and remembered for a great many years the trouble she had experienced in spending her gold-piece.

ALLIE'S KITTEN.

A PALE little child was looking out of the window, on the afternoon before Christmas, watching the people over the way. There were children there; and they had just been jumping and clapping their hands at the sight of a lady in a fur cloak, who went up the steps with her arms full of parcels.

Allie had often watched those children—there were so many of them, and they seemed so happy; and then she turned back to their one room, where her patient mother sat sewing, and where the carpet was woven of rags that the two had sewed together. There was a bed in the room, where Allie and her mother slept, and two chairs, and a small table; and in the closet there was a loaf of bread, and a few things to eat, for Mrs. Sedgemore was very poor, and had to work hard every day to support herself and Allie.

Allie was a delicate little thing; and, although she seldom laughed, she had a very sweet smile, and was gentle and affectionate. The house in which they lived was pretty nice-looking, but they had only one room in it; the whole house was owned by Mrs. Pragg, who did not mind letting Allie and her mother live there—they were so quiet and well-behaved.

They had the front room in the second story; but when Allie was a baby, they lived in a large house, beautifully furnished; and she first opened her eyes in a pleasant room that looked out upon a large square; and there was a beautiful little crib in the room, with a rose-coloured coverlet, trimmed with lace; and this was Allie's first bed.

But the child had forgotten these things; although Mrs. Sedgemore often thought of them, and of the time when the husband that she had loved so much first came staggering home—a *drunkard!* Then she remembered how he had been brought to her all bruised, and disfigured, and dying—having had a fall in one of his fits of intoxica-

tion; and how, when he was dead, she found that he had spent every thing, and that there was but one shilling left in the house for herself and Allie.

She remembered the coarse-looking men who had walked through those beautiful rooms, and roughly handled the things that she cherished, because they were associated with happier hours; and how, when she asked one of these men to leave her a work-box—a gift from her husband before they were married, for she wished to keep it for Allie—he replied: "Couldn't do it, ma'am, it's against our rules;" and how she let them take *all*, and went to one of the empty rooms with Allie, and cried, until the child was frightened and began to sob too.

Then she remembered that she had no time to indulge in weeping; she must exert herself for the sake of her child; and she went around to the friends who had visited her so often in her beautiful house, and asked them for work to keep from starving. These people told her that they were very sorry for her, and that she must come and

see them now and then; but they had no work to give her, and they did not know of any one who had.

Then Mrs. Sedgemore went to several houses where the people were strangers, and told them her story, and asked them for work; but a great many of them did not believe her, and spoke so harshly, that she began to be afraid that she and Allie must starve. At last, a kind-hearted woman took pity on her, and gave her some work herself, and recommended her to others; and then they went to live in the house with Mrs. Pragg; and now Mrs. Sedgemore had plenty to do, but she was obliged to sew very steadily—often late at night—to earn a little money.

She had to pay Mrs. Pragg every month for the room they had; and there was wood to buy, and coal, and a great many things that would scarcely be thought of; and then Allie would want a new pair of shoes, although the poor child almost cried when she saw how many bright shillings, that her mother had toiled for, were paid out to the shoemaker. And she would look at her lit-

tle foot, and remember the bright-coloured pieces of morocco that she had seen on the floor of the shop, and think that the man might make her a little pair of shoes out of them without charging so much.

Once Allie had run a needle in her foot, because she would not tell her mother that her shoe had a hole in it; and Mrs. Sedgemore had to pull it with her teeth, and when she had done this, she fell on the bed and fainted. Allie thought her mother was dead, and screamed so loud that Mrs. Pragg and two or three women came running in; and they brought vinegar and burnt feathers, and rubbed Mrs. Sedgemore's hands, and bathed her temples; and at last she opened her eyes, and there sat little Allie, patient and uncomplaining, although her foot pained her very much. Mrs. Pragg bought her a new pair of shoes, for a present; and after that, Mrs. Sedgemore always examined the old ones very carefully to see that there were no holes in them.

Allie had been looking out of the window for some time; and when the lady and children over the way had disappeared,

she said—"Mother, what does Christmas *mean?*"

"Come here, Allie," said Mrs. Sedgemore, as she laid aside her work to stroke the silken curls that were soon nestling in her lap. "Come to me, darling, and let us have a little talk together."

"Mother," said Allie, when she had placed herself on the low bench at Mrs. Sedgemore's feet, "*we* never have any Christmas."

"Yes, we do, darling," replied her mother; "Christmas is the birthday of our glorious Saviour; and he was born, and died as much for you and me as for the rest of the world—for rich and poor alike."

"But why do people have so many presents *then?*" asked Allie.

"Because," replied Mrs. Sedgemore, "Christ himself was a great present to all the world; and it is to commemorate this that the custom prevails. Do you not remember, Allie, how the wise men of the East brought *him* presents?—'gold, and frankincense, and myrrh?'"

"Oh, yes!" said Allie, while a bright

smile came into her face. "Tell me that beautiful story again, mother."

Allie was never weary of hearing this; and her mother told her the whole story of the bright star that had arisen in the east; and how, when the wise men came to where they had seen the star shining, they found a beautiful little baby lying in a manger, and they knew, from the radiance that shone round him, that he was God's own Son, and they fell down and worshipped him. Mrs. Sedgemore repeated this story so prettily that Allie thought she could plainly see the beautiful child, and the angels, and the wise men kneeling, and the Virgin Mary standing beside the manger.

When it was finished, Allie kissed her mother, and begged her not to sew on Christmas-day. Mrs. Sedgemore smiled, and said that she did not intend to work much the next day.

"I am afraid that no one will bring us any presents, Allie," said her mother; "but we must love each other very much, and remember that we, too, have a share in the great Present; and in the morning, we will

go to church, and see the Christmas-greens in beautiful wreaths, and hear the clergyman tell us of the Saviour's birth; and in the afternoon, I will bake a little cake, and we will have a pleasant chat and a nice tea together—you and I, Allie."

Allie smiled, and looked at her mother fondly, as she wished for the time to come when she could help her work; and she thought that if she ever got rich, she would dress her mother in velvet and satin, and she should never touch a bit of sewing as long as she lived.

While Allie was thinking of these things, and Mrs. Sedgemore sat stitching a shirt-bosom, there was a knock at the door; and when Allie said, "Come in," Mrs. Pragg walked into the room, with a large plate of crullers in one hand, and a round, open basket in the other.

"Fresh made," said she, as she put the crullers on the table; "and here, Allie, is *your* Christmas-gift."

Allie had wondered what *could* be in that round basket; and, as she walked cautiously up to it, she saw something white and soft.

Two little ears were sticking up, and there was a regular breathing as of some small animal fast asleep.

"It's *alive!*" cried Allie, in the greatest delight.

Mrs. Pragg nodded, and enjoyed her surprise when she found that it was a beautiful little gray and white kitten. It had such a soft back, and was curled up in such a little heap, that Allie thought it the sweetest little thing she had ever seen.

"Is it *mine?*" she exclaimed; "really my own, to keep forever?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Pragg, "'really your own, to keep forever'—if you don't kill it with kindness."

"Oh, mother!" said Allie, "*do* tell Mrs. Pragg that I couldn't be so wicked as to *kill* it, and I love it so very much!"

"Mrs. Pragg does not mean, darling, that you would kill it on purpose," said Mrs. Sedgemore, "or even through neglect; but children often kill kittens by nursing and handling them too much."

"I will never touch Kitty," replied the child, "except to stroke her a little, when

she climbs on my lap, and I wouldn't wake her up now for the world."

Allie carried the basket as preciously as if the kitten had been a child; and, having placed it on a high stand that stood by her side of the bed, she called this "Kitty's crib," and begged her mother and Mrs. Pragg not to speak very loud, for fear of disturbing it. She was even more delighted than Mrs. Pragg had expected her to be, and thanked her so often for it that the good-natured woman felt glad it had been in her power to make the child so happy.

Allie forgot all about the crullers, and sat watching her kitten, until at last it opened its eyes and mewed a little. She gave it a piece of cake, but Kitty didn't want it; and then Mrs. Sedgemore went to the closet, and poured some milk into a saucer. Kitty put out a little pink tongue, and lapped it up so quickly that she very soon came to the bottom of the saucer; and Allie declared that this was the very happiest Christmas she had ever known.

She put the basket down gently on the floor, and Miss Kitty crawled out of it, and

walked around a little, stretching herself as she went, and trying to find out where she was. But she was almost too young to play yet, and when Allie put the basket close up to her, she crawled back again and went to sleep. At night, Allie looked at her kitten the last thing before she went to bed, and she woke up several times and touched it very gently, to see that it was safe.

She gave it a nice breakfast of milk; and having put it back in its basket, she went with her mother to church. There were a great many rich people there, who had beautifully dressed children; but there was not one of them as happy, on that Christmas-morning, as was the lonely little child with her kitten.

They went home to rich dinners and large rooms full of company; while Allie took her mother's hand, and skipped along, as she thought of her kitten, without noticing the contemptuous looks that the rich children bestowed upon her little quilted hood and the old cloak that she had worn ever since she could remember. There was a sweet little face looking out of the hood,

on which a mother's eye was bent lovingly; and Allie felt perfectly happy when they got back to their own room, without a single thought of envying the children over the way.

Their simple dinner was soon eaten; and then Allie sat down with Kitty in the basket, and the basket on her lap, and read to her mother from the Bible, and talked about the happy Christmas they were having.

"Mother," said she, "what shall I call Kitty? I think that she ought to have some name."

"So she should," replied Mrs. Sedgemore, "and we must think about it."

"*I* think, mother," observed Allie, after much reflection, "that I should like to name her after *you*."

Mrs. Sedgemore smiled. "I am afraid," said she, "that Angelina is too long a name for a kitten. How would you like 'Lillie?'"

"Oh!" said Allie, joyfully, "that will be the very thing! I think that Lillie is the very prettiest name that could be found!"

So Lillie was christened on Christmas-

day; but she slept there, in her basket crib, without caring whether she had any name or not.

"I am afraid, mother," said Allie, as she sat looking at her kitten, "that I shall be *too* happy now. Perhaps it is wicked to think so much of Lillie."

"Not if you do not neglect your duties on her account," replied Mrs. Sedgemore, as she thought sadly of the time when her plans for this beloved child's happiness were so different from the present reality; "and I do not think, Allie, that you will love God or me any the less for having Kitty to fondle. There is no harm, darling, in being innocently happy, and it makes me *very* happy to see my child so."

Allie put her arm around her mother's neck; and even Lillie was for a moment forgotten, as she stood there telling that dear mother how much she loved her, and how happy they would be when she grew large enough to work. Mrs. Sedgemore looked fondly on the pale, sweet little face, so lovingly applied to hers; and as she thought that this delicate flower might

chance to wither before it was blown, she could not help whispering in her heart—"Father! let this cup pass from me!"

And so their Christmas-day passed; and while, in the homes around them, there was feasting and rejoicing, the mother and child sat there in the gathering twilight and watched the stars, which Allie said were little lamps lit in the sky; and one, brightest of all, she thought must be the glorious star that had arisen in the east.

The next day, Mrs. Sedgemore sat at her work again as steadily as ever; and except Lillie, nestled there in her little basket, there was nothing left to remind them of Christmas. Only those who have been as lonely—who have had as little to amuse or interest them—could realize the amount of love and tenderness that Allie poured forth upon her little pet. It was so innocent and helpless-looking, that it seemed to claim her tenderest care; and she would move it so gently, and look at it so lovingly, that Mrs. Sedgemore often smiled at the rapt attention Allie bestowed upon her kitten.

The little thing seemed fat and healthy;

and when at last it would actually play with a ball of cord, and frisk about at Allie's feet, the child's happiness was complete. There was now such a bright little face in that lonely room, that people who passed often glanced up at the window in which Allie sat with her kitten, and wondered what made the sunbeam there.

One afternoon, there was a loud knock at the door; and when it was opened, a haughty-looking lady swept into the room, and seemed to fill it all up with her splendid robes that spread out so far, and the grand look with which she glanced around, as though the place in which she found herself seemed to *her* no larger than a closet.

She was accompanied by a little girl rather older than Allie, who looked quite as haughty as her mother; and who, if her face had not worn so unamiable an expression, would certainly have been a very pretty child. She wore a large white beaver hat ornamented with feathers, and a very rich coat trimmed with fur, and carried a little muff; and her hair hung down

from beneath her round hat in long, light curls. Augusta Knight was always called "a beautiful child," and "very aristocratic-looking;" but she seemed so proud, and her under-lip stuck out so, that Allie shrank back into her window, and hugged Lillie closer, as though she had been in danger.

Mrs. Knight was a rich lady who professed to be very charitable, and went around among the poor, and gave out a great deal of sewing; but she loved to pry into all their concerns, and asked so many questions that the colour often rose to Mrs. Sedgemore's pale cheek at the wealthy lady's impertinence.

Mrs. Knight would then talk a great deal of "gratitude," and say that "she never expected to find it in the world," and sweep out of the room so angrily, that poor Mrs. Sedgemore feared she would give her no more work to do, and prejudice her other customers against her, for many of them had been persuaded to give her their sewing through the influence of Mrs. Knight.

Having now spread herself out very much on the chair that Mrs. Sedgemore drew for-

ward, the lady gathered up the rich silk skirt as though fearful of soiling it, although the room was always neat and clean, and very different from the dirty street through which the dress had been trailed; and then she spread her embroidered handkerchief on Allie's little bench, and told Augusta to sit down upon it.

But Miss Augusta preferred standing; and with her arms folded in the muff, and her head tossed up very high, she looked scornfully at Allie, and despised her very much for living in one room and having no handsome furniture.

Mrs. Knight examined some work of hers that Mrs. Sedgemore had just finished; and, although it was done with the utmost neatness and just as she had ordered it, she now wanted several alterations made, and all the fine stitching must be picked out. Mrs. Sedgemore looked tired and worried while the great lady was bending over the work, criticising and finding fault with it; and the colour came into Allie's face as she heard Mrs. Knight tormenting her mother, and she wished that she would go,

and take her cross-looking little girl with her.

Lillie, who had been fast asleep on Allie's lap, now began to stir a little, and pricked up its ears, until Augusta's attention was attracted to it.

"What is it?" said she, as she came close up to get a better view of it.

Allie was quite glad to hear her speak, and look pleasant; so she turned Lillie around, and showed her the cunning little head and ears, and told her its name, and how it had been given to her. Then she remembered that it was Lillie's tea-time, and she poured some milk in a saucer, and put it on the window-seat.

Augusta quite forgot her stiffness as she bent down to watch the kitten; and she and Allie had quite a talk about it. But when it had finished its milk, and was walking on the window-seat, Augusta suddenly seized it by the neck, and held it up in the air, laughing as the kitten stretched its feet around to get down again.

"Oh, *please* don't!" cried Allie, in great

distress at her favourite's struggles; "you will certainly hurt it!"

"Poh!" replied Augusta. "It don't hurt it a bit; this is the proper way to carry kittens."

Allie's cheek was deeply flushed as she took her pet from Augusta's unwilling hand; and it was only for her mother's sake that she restrained herself from telling the little lady what she thought of her.

Lillie, released from her unpleasant position, walked around and shook herself, as if to get her limbs in order; and then she ran after the ball of cord that Allie threw her, and performed so many antics that Augusta was very much amused, and felt quite sorry when her mother insisted upon going home.

Allie, however, was very glad to be rid of them both; and leaving Lillie to frolic around the room, she sat patiently down on her little bench, and began picking out the work that had failed to satisfy the troublesome Mrs. Knight. While thus engaged, she spoke of their visitors with more warmth than she usually exhibited.

"We must learn patience, darling," replied her mother, with a gentle smile: "poverty has many trials to contend with."

Allie sighed, as she thought again of the home in which she would place that dear mother, if she ever had the money; and the two were very quiet and sad after the great lady's visit.

The next day, a woman very much dressed, yet not a lady in look or manner, knocked loudly at the door; and when Allie opened it she sailed into the room; and, laying down a five-dollar bill, she said that Mrs. Knight had sent her to get a kitten for Miss Augusta, that the young lady had taken a great fancy to, the day before; but as the little girl appeared to think a great deal of it, she was willing to give that enormous price for it.

"Oh! mother! mother!" gasped Allie, holding her kitten tight, tight in her arms.

That pleading little face, so pale in its grief and fright, was more to the loving mother than all the great lady's displeasure,

and, handing back the five-dollar bill, she replied very gently:

"Tell Mrs. Knight that I am sorry not to oblige her; but this kitten is, as you see, my child's only amusement, and for a very small sum she can get one that would please Miss Augusta quite as well."

The woman looked angrily at Allie, as though she would have liked to snatch the kitten away from her; and taking up the money, she flounced out of the room, leaving Mrs. Sedgemore pale and trembling with apprehension, while Allie burst into a flood of tears.

"Oh, mother!" she exclaimed, "what a wicked woman that Mrs. Knight is! She is as bad as the rich man in the Bible, who took the poor man's only little lamb, for Lillie is *my* lamb, and now she wants it!"

Mrs. Sedgemore tried to quiet her; and the child buried her face in her mother's lap, and sat there sobbing for some time, with Kitty nestled in her bosom.

"It is not *wicked*, is it, mother?" said she, at length. "It is not like worship-

ping idols to be so very, very fond of Lillie?"

"No, darling," replied Mrs. Sedgemore, very sadly; "it is not like worshipping idols, because, much as you love Lillie, I know that you love *me* better, and God best of all. I am afraid, Allie, that his wisdom, for ends that we cannot now see, has ordered it so that you will have to give up your pet."

"Oh, Lillie! Lillie!" sobbed the child, as she threw herself down in a burst of uncontrollable grief. But when Allie saw how her mother was suffering, she sprang up, and putting her arms around her, exclaimed passionately:

"I *do* love you better, dear mother! But oh! why must I give up Lillie?"

"I will tell you why, dear child," replied Mrs. Sedgemore, as she clasped her closely in her arms. "Mrs. Knight will be very much displeased at my refusal, and I am afraid that she will give me no more work to do; and then how are you and I to live, Allie? Kitty, too, would die of starvation."

Allie listened quietly, but sorrowfully, to her mother's words; and when she had finished, she placed her kitten on Mrs. Sedgemore's lap, saying, with tearful eyes:

"There, mother! I will give Lillie to *you*, to do as you please with; but I could not bear to give her to Augusta Knight; and, oh! it would seem so wicked to *sell* her for that hateful money!"

Just as Allie finished speaking, the woman, who had been there before, came to say that Mrs. Knight wanted the sewing that she had left with Mrs. Sedgemore; she intended giving it to a more *grateful* person.

Mrs. Sedgemore turned very pale, but she spoke so gently that the woman was somewhat softened.

"I do not think," said she, "that Mrs. Knight will be offended if I don't give you the work now. I am just going there; and if she still wishes it returned, I will take it back myself."

The woman went off; and when Mrs. Sedgemore had dressed herself and Allie in the warmest things they had, the poor child

indulged in a last crying-spell over Lillie, which she tried not to let her mother see; and then she tucked the kitten under her little cloak, and the two went out sadly, and scarcely spoke until they reached Mrs. Knight's.

A coloured man left them standing in a very high, broad hall, while he went to tell his mistress; and while they were waiting, Augusta Knight passed close by them, and looked at Allie very angrily and scornfully.

But just as she was going up-stairs, Lillie looked out and mewed; and she turned back, exclaiming joyfully: "So, you have brought the kitten? Oh! I am *so* glad!"

She seized it immediately, and sat down on one of the steps to fondle it; while poor Allie burst into tears.

Mrs. Knight now came down; but, when she saw the kitten, she spoke quite pleasantly to Mrs. Sedgemore, and asked them to come in and sit down. She took them into the drawing-room, to let them see what fine things she had; and she handed them some cake, and appeared very much pleased

when Mrs. Sedgemore told her that the kitten was a present.

She gave her permission to keep the sewing she had engaged, and promised to give her more; and told Allie that, if Augusta had not been going out, she would have shown her all her toys and her play-room; and she said that she must come soon and see the kitten, and select something that she would like to have instead of it.

Augusta looked very happy, and Allie very sad; and, quite sick of all the splendour around her, she was glad to go home again.

She sat there, in the window-seat, mourning over Lillie, but crying softly, for fear of worrying her mother. Poor little Allie! How lonely the room looked without Lillie! She put away the basket that she had slept in, for it made her sad to look at it; and the kind mother saw all her grief, and felt very unhappy on Allie's account.

Several days passed wearily on,—wearily for poor Allie; and Mrs. Sedgemore had al-

tered the work that Mrs. Knight sent her, and finished it to take home. Allie asked to go too: it would be a comfort to see Lillie once more; and her mother having smiled an assent to the pleading look, the two were soon on their way to the house which the child never thought of without melancholy feelings.

Miss Augusta was graciously pleased to be at home; and perhaps Mrs. Knight felt somewhat touched by the expression of that sad little face, for to Allie's wistful look she replied quite kindly—

"You will find Kitty in Miss Augusta's play-room; she has become a great pet. Augusta, my love," she added, "take Allie with you, and let her choose some present from among your things for the one she made you."

Augusta walked up-stairs, and left Allie to follow if she chose; and the child, who was weary with her walk and unaccustomed to large houses, toiled up the steps, wondering if they would ever come to an end, and feeling almost lost in so much space. They passed rooms with heavy curtains and pic-

tures, and beautiful things that Allie would have stopped to look at; but Augusta walked directly on to a large room, that seemed a perfect museum.

Here were dolls of all sizes—tea-sets of various materials — baby-houses innumerable—strange toys, of which Allie could not even imagine the name, and curiosities scattered about all over. As the child stood gazing upon this profusion, she could not help wondering that a person with so many possessions could have the heart to deprive her of her one treasure.

"Now," said Augusta, with a very magnanimous air, after enjoying her companion's astonishment, "you can have any of these things that you please; for mamma told me that if you wanted any thing that I cared about, she would buy it for me again."

But Allie, although naturally surprised at the sight of so many strange and beautiful things, felt not the least desire to possess any of them: it seemed too much like being paid for Lillie; and Augusta was very much astonished when she replied—

"I shouldn't care half so much for *all* these things together, as for Lillie without them. I want to see *her*."

"*I* don't think so very much of Lillie," replied Augusta, contemptuously; "she isn't so pretty *now*." Then pointing to a beautifully-carved little crib, from which she had taken one of her dolls, she showed Allie the kitten, who was curled up, asleep.

Allie looked at it long and steadily, and saw that it was no longer the plump little playful thing she had parted from. It looked thin, and neglected.

"I dare say it is starved!" she exclaimed, unconsciously speaking her thoughts aloud.

"*Starved*, indeed!" exclaimed Augusta, angrily. "I don't believe it's half as much starved as when *you* had it! You were too poor to feed it."

The colour rushed brightly over Allie's face at this ill-mannered speech; for, although she could restrain her tongue from speaking, she could not conceal this proof of anger; and Augusta, as if to provoke her, took up the kitten, and stroked it and

pulled its ears, without heeding its plaintive mewings.

When she first saw Allie so happy in the possession of her pet, she imagined that it would afford her the same delight; but the spoiled child soon tired of it, as she did of her other toys, and poor Lillie was both neglected and ill used. Sometimes she would go hungry for hours, and then Augusta would feed her with a double quantity, to make up for it; sometimes she would be kept too warm, and sometimes too cold; and she had become puny from constant handling. All this Allie noticed, and she turned away in tears that she could scarcely restrain.

Augusta, having sufficiently amused herself with teasing the kitten and tormenting Allie, now led the way down stairs; and the poor child went home with the heaviest heart she had ever known.

She told her mother how Lillie was treated, and asked if she couldn't take her back now. Augusta had said that she did not care much about her.

Mrs. Sedgemore shook her head sorrow-

fully, for she felt very much grieved at Allie's distress.

"I am afraid not, darling," she replied. "It would never do to take back a present, once given; and if Augusta sees it with you, thriving and well, her old wish to possess it will return, and a second parting would be harder than the first."

Allie said no more about it; but she moved around so quietly, and looked so sad, that her mother wished kind Mrs. Pragg had never given her the kitten that had caused her so much unhappiness.

Two or three weeks after this, came a mild, pleasant day, almost like spring; and Allie looked so pale and thin, that Mrs. Sedgemore thought a walk would do her good. She could not go with her, for she had a great deal of work on hand; and as Allie was quite old enough to take care of herself, she wrapped her up carefully, and sent her out alone.

In all this time they had seen nothing of

Mrs. Knight or Augusta, and heard no news of Lillie; and, as Allie felt a great desire to inquire about her kitten, she resolved to walk to Mrs. Knight's, and watch for some one to come out. She did not like to go in alone; but she thought that if Augusta came out, she would ask her about Lillie.

She remembered the way very well, and walked on slowly, for she was almost afraid that Lillie might be dead. She had reached the house; but feeling very tired, and trembling at the thought of her pet, she sat down on a step, and looked up and down the street for Augusta, who, she thought, might be returning home from a walk.

As she sat there looking about, her eyes fell upon an object in the middle of the street, just in front of Mrs. Knight's door. She walked closer to it; and when she saw a little white and gray kitten stretched out stiff and dead, she burst forth into a sob of "Lillie! Lillie!" and sank back upon the step. Yes, it was poor Lillie—killed by the ill-treatment of the cruel child who had

taken her from a loving owner to gratify her own caprice.

Allie sat there crying, and feeling too wretched to think of any thing else; but, after a while, she felt something on her shoulder.

"Now," said somebody, "what is the matter?"

The child raised her face, all bathed in tears, and there stood a kind-looking old gentleman, with a gold-headed cane in his hand, with which he had just touched her shoulder.

"Oh! my kitten!" sobbed Allie, as she pointed to the place where Lillie was lying.

"What does this mean?" asked the old gentleman. "How did your kitten get there?"

Allie told him the whole story as well as she could, for she stopped very often to cry afresh at every recollection of Lillie; and Mr. Upsted listened very attentively until she had finished.

He was very well acquainted with Mrs. Knight and Augusta; and telling Allie to

come with him, he took her by the hand, and rang the bell.

"Oh, Uncle John," exclaimed Augusta, running into the hall, "have you brought me that nice book?"

"No," replied Mr. Upsted, shortly, for he was not so well pleased as usual at Augusta's calling him "uncle." "I have brought you something else this time."

When the haughty child saw the tearful face of little Allie, she shrank back, rather frightened, for she remembered how she had treated her about the kitten; and she was afraid that Mr. Upsted would know it all, and bring her no more nice presents.

Allie's new friend took both the children into the drawing-room, where he sat and talked to Augusta for a long time about her selfish and unfeeling conduct; but the spoiled child was more angry than sorry, and, bursting into tears, she ran from the room and told her mother a most lamentable story.

Mr. Upsted sat talking to Allie, and asked her so many questions, that he soon knew all about her mother, and how poor they

were. Then he asked Allie if she would like to learn hard lessons, and know as much as Augusta Knight did, and learn to play on the piano and paint beautiful pictures; and when she grew up to be a woman, she could teach these things to other people, and earn a great deal of money, and prevent her mother from sewing so steadily.

Allie looked so joyful at the idea of helping her mother, that Mr. Upsted thought she had the sweetest little face he had ever seen; and he resolved that the loss of her kitten should be abundantly made up to her.

Mrs. Knight was very much surprised at what Augusta told her; but Mr. Upsted did a great many queer things; and, as he was very wealthy and she had known him for a long time, she thought that when he died, he would leave a great deal of his money to Augusta. She had taught her to call him "Uncle John," although he was not really any relation whatever; and both Augusta and her mother went to see him very often, for he lived in a large house, and made

Augusta beautiful presents. No one lived with him but his servants; he had never been married, and seemed to have no relations.

When Mrs. Knight heard that he had taken Allie under his protection, she resolved to treat the child very kindly; and she went into the room and spoke to her, and told her how sorry she was that the kitten had died.

When Allie heard Mrs. Knight say that she was sorry, she looked up with such a sweet smile, that the lady really wished she had never let Augusta take the kitten.

Mr. Upsted was perfectly quiet until Mrs. Knight had stopped talking, and then he said—

"I believe you think a great deal of me here; don't you?"

"Why, certainly," replied Mrs. Knight, with a sweet smile. "I consider you my most *valued* friend."

Allie, who was seated quite close to Mr. Upsted, started a little, for she was sure that he gave something like a growl at this,

and she wondered very much what he would do next.

"Then," said he, "I have a favour to ask of you. I wish this child to have the same advantages of education as your daughter Augusta. The *expense* I will pay, and the *trouble* I expect you to put up with for my sake, and as some compensation for the wrong you have done her."

Mrs. Knight was extremely astonished, and so was Allie. But the lady feared to offend Mr. Upsted; and it was agreed that Allie should come there every day, and take lessons of the same governess who taught Augusta. Mr. Upsted charged both Mrs. Knight and Allie not to mention him to her mother; wishing Mrs. Sedgemore to suppose that Allie's good fortune was entirely owing to Mrs. Knight's generosity. Allie thought this strange, but she did not wish to displease one who had been so kind to her; and, full of the idea of what she would do when she had learned all the things Mr. Upstead spoke of, she ran home with quite a radiant face.

She cried again over Lillie's fate; but her

mother said, with a smile, "You see, Allie, that even trials sometimes prove blessings in disguise. Lillie's loss has certainly been your gain; for, although she has been taken from you, you have had a great deal given in her stead."

When Augusta heard what Mr. Upsted had done for Allie, she was so angry that she threw herself on the floor in a passion, and declared that she would never study with "that little beggar," and behaved so badly that her mother was obliged to punish her pretty severely. Mrs. Knight was beginning to find that spoiled children prove no less troublesome and disagreeable to their parents than to other people.

Mrs. Sedgemore felt so grateful for the kindness that had been shown to Allie, that she went with her to Mrs. Knight's the next day, and thanked the lady so earnestly, that she was quite ashamed to take what was not her due; but she did not dare to disobey Mr. Upsted.

The governess, although dismayed at first to find that Allie could only read, was somewhat encouraged by the bright little face that

looked so anxious to learn; and before long they became very good friends. Allie's sweetness and docility contrasted very favourably with Augusta's troublesome conduct; and the spoiled child was so highly indignant that "the little beggar," as she termed her, should be held up to *her* as a pattern, that she tried to torment Allie in every possible way. The sweet-tempered child parried these attacks as well as she could; and thinking of her mother, and the time when she would lighten her toils, she went steadily on, and took Augusta's annoyances so meekly, that she was quite disappointed.

Miss Brent, the governess, had never had such a pupil. Allie's patience and industry were inexhaustible, and she seemed likely to learn more in one year than Augusta had learned in three. How proud she was of every fresh triumph, when she went home to her mother! And how fondly that mother smiled at the bright castles that Allie built in the air, when she talked of the time that she would have a school of her own, and such nice little children to

teach, and every thing so pleasant and prosperous!

Allie sat one day at the piano, practising her scales, when Augusta, who was more rudely disposed than usual, snatched away the exercise-book.

"Oh, please don't!" exclaimed Allie; "Miss Brent will be very angry if I don't learn this lesson."

"It is no matter whether you learn it or not," replied Augusta, who felt provoked by some fresh mark of favour that Mr. Upsted had bestowed upon Allie; "*you* will never be any thing but a beggar as long as you live!"

Allie leaned her head down upon the instrument, and burst into tears. She began to fear that she would never succeed in her bright schemes for her mother's benefit.

"You have no business at all in this house," continued Augusta; "and you had better stay with your mother, in your one

room, and sew as she does. Uncle John thinks a great deal more of me than he does of you; and one of these days, I shall have nearly all his money: mamma says so."

"Don't be too sure of that, my little lady!" exclaimed a voice that startled Augusta into immediate silence. She had been too much engaged in tormenting Allie to hear the rustling of a newspaper; and Mr. Upsted had taken his seat very quietly, unnoticed by either of the children.

"Now," said he to Augusta, "just go up stairs to your mother with my compliments, and tell her that she may as well spare herself the trouble of teaching you any more such doctrines; for I don't intend that you shall ever have a cent of my money. And you, Allie, put on your things, and come home: I am going with you."

Allie was very much surprised, but she did as she was told, and soon found herself walking home with her hand in Mr. Upsted's, that gentleman seeming very restless and disturbed. He spoke not a word to his little companion; but he changed the

position of his gold-headed cane very often, and appeared to be thinking deeply on some important subject.

When they reached the house, he went up stairs to Mrs. Sedgemore's room, and, without allowing Allie to knock, opened the door and walked directly in.

Mrs. Sedgemore had been crying; for a great many recollections of happier times had risen up that afternoon, and wept to think that little Allie must struggle with the world as she had done, and perhaps sink under hardships and disappointment.

She started on hearing a man's footsteps, so unusual a sound in that quiet room; but when Mr. Upsted stood before her, looking steadily at her, she uttered a scream that terrified Allie, and then exclaiming, "Uncle John!" she threw her arms around his neck, and began to cry again.

Allie was very much puzzled; and Mr. Upsted replied, "I hope, Angelina, that you feel thoroughly ashamed of yourself, now? I am very angry with you yet."

But it was of no use to look stern; his lip quivered, and, clasping Mrs. Sedge-

more in his arms, he was soon crying too.

"Did any one ever have such a wicked niece?" said the old gentleman, at length, as he pretended to have regained his composure, "to leave a kind old uncle and a splendid home for a worthless fellow, who turned out exactly as I predicted!"

"Spare my husband, dear uncle!" whispered Mrs. Sedgemore; "he was Allie's father, and, whatever his faults may have been, never unkind to me."

"Well, well," returned Mr. Upsted, "let bygones be bygones; you seem to have managed me completely your own way. I meant, Angelina, never to have spoken to you again; but you must train this good-for-nothing little Allie to have such enticing ways on purpose to conquer me; and I really believe she killed her kitten on purpose that morning, and sat there watching for me, and—"

Here the old gentleman broke down again; and Allie wondered whether he was joking or in earnest.

His next movement was to take the child

up in his arms, and saying, "Come, Angelina, the old house is waiting for us," he moved toward the door, as if going home at once.

But Mrs. Sedgemore drew him back, as she whispered, "You have not told me yet, uncle, that you forgive me; I cannot go without *that*."

"Oh, yes," replied Mr. Upsted, impatiently, "I suppose that I shall have to do it; and I think," he added, glancing his eye around the humble room, "that you have been punished quite enough. Come! what are you waiting for *now?*"

But his niece told him, very gently, that she could not leave without some preparation; and with much difficulty she persuaded him to wait until evening, when, he said, he would bring the carriage for them and take them off in style.

As Mr. Upsted walked back alone, he began thinking of a great many things that had happened years ago; and remembered when his orphan niece had first come to live with him, and how he had loved her as if she had been his own child, and felt so

proud of her beauty and sweetness, and determined that she should marry a rich man, and have all *his* money beside.

But she loved a young man who, although engaged in a prosperous business, was not rich enough to please her uncle; and he was very angry, and refused to part with her for some time. But his niece talked so much about it, and begged him so often to give his consent,—she could not, she said, leave him without *that*,—that, at last, he told her he gave his consent, if she chose to go; but if she did, he would have nothing more to do with her.

She cried a great deal, and almost determined to stay; but then Mr. Sedgemore told her how much he loved her, and she married him, and never saw her uncle again until that day. He felt very lonely indeed; and when he became acquainted with Mrs. Knight and Augusta, he thought that he would like to have them for friends; and the little girl was so pretty, and *appeared* so amiable, that he almost wished she had been his niece.

The first day that he saw Allie, he loved

her sweet little face; and when she told him her name, and all about her mother, he knew very well who she was; but he felt so angry at his niece for leaving him, that he tried not to care any thing about her. But every day he loved Allie more; and at last he could stand it no longer, but determined to take Allie and her mother home with him at once.

He had now seen quite enough of Augusta Knight; and the severe reprimand which that young lady received from her mother made her more angry than ever. "She didn't care," she said, "for Uncle John, or his money, either! He was a cross old thing; and that Allie Sedgemore was an artful little piece; and she wished that she had never seen any of them!" But when her mother told her that Allie would now ride in a carriage, and be a great lady, and have more money than she would, Augusta burst into a passionate fit of crying, and frightened her mother so much with her violence, that she promised her a beautiful new dress immediately, to make her stop.

And then the mother sat down, and reflected a little sadly upon the effects of her indulgence; but, instead of making the passionate child behave properly, she said that "She could not bear to break Augusta's *spirit!*"

The carriage came; and Mrs. Sedgemore and Allie bade Mrs. Pragg "good-by," and their landlady cried at parting with them, and declared that they quite deserved this good fortune. Mr. Upsted invited her to come and see them in their new home; and Mrs. Pragg curtsied, and felt highly honoured.

It seemed like a dream, going back to her old home again, after so many years' absence; and Mrs. Sedgemore was so much overcome, when they reached the house, that Uncle John lifted her from the carriage and carried her to a sofa in the drawing-room.

Allie's next Christmas was very different from the others that had preceded it. It

was Christmas-eve; and she stood in the window of a large house that overlooked a pleasant square, half-veiled by the rich lace curtains; and she looked upon the merry street, where all were passing to and fro smiling and happy, and then she turned to her mother, who sat half-buried in a large, soft arm-chair—just such a chair as Allie had so often longed to buy her; and she smiled as her eye fell upon the rich folds of her mother's dress, and she saw her darling dream realized without the toil through which she had looked forward to it.

Some one was coming up the steps, and Allie ran out into the hall; but Uncle John chose to push her unceremoniously aside.

"No matter for such nonsense as kissing *now*," said he, driving her before him into the drawing-room; "you are such a dreadful romp, Allie, that you have nearly crushed the contents of my pocket."

Allie laughed, and looked so bright, that she seemed almost to deserve the name her uncle had given her.

"There," said Mr. Upsted, as he handed his niece a paper; "don't let me hear any thing more about being *dependent*."

Mrs. Sedgemore found that her Christmas-gift was a deed of property, by which she found herself owner of the house they lived in and several thousand dollars a-year. She was about to refuse it; but Mr. Upsted looked very stern, and, putting his hands behind him, he began walking up and down the room.

Something put its head out of his pocket, and mewed. Allie, who was behind him, started to see a gray and white kitten; and Mr. Upsted dragged it forth, with—

"Come here, you torment! I have had trouble enough to get you, and trouble enough to bring you home! She is an old friend of yours, Allie."

It was the very image of Lillie; but, instead of being as much delighted as her uncle had expected, Allie burst into tears. Mr. Upsted looked at her in surprise.

"*Please* don't be angry with me, Uncle John!" said she. "It was *very* kind of you to take all this trouble; but it makes me

feel so sad to think of poor Lillie, that I cannot bear to be reminded of her."

Her uncle took the kitten away; and having given one of the servants directions to dispose of it carefully, he came back to the drawing-room.

"It is well, Allie," said he, kindly, "that I have ordered several substantial boxes to make their appearance, or you would not think much of Santa Claus, this time."

"I think enough of *you*, uncle, without the things; don't you believe that I do?"

Mr. Upsted made no answer but a kiss; and Allie went back to the window to shed some tears, even on Christmas-eve, over her lost kitten.

THE LOST MONEY.

It was on a bright winter afternoon that three little girls were walking home from school together. Their names were Antoinette Cowden, Emily Bassett, and Clara Henwood. Antoinette Cowden had long light curls and bright blue eyes, and was considered quite the pet and beauty of the school; Emily Bassett was not very pretty herself, but she was a great admirer of Antoinette's, and always with her; and Clara Henwood was a nice-looking little girl, who will have a great deal to say for herself, by-and-by.

They were talking of Christmas, and the presents they expected, and those they had received last year.

"I got so many," said Antoinette, upon being appealed to, "that I couldn't possibly remember them all. Let me see," she continued — "papa gave me a watch, and

mamma a bracelet, and Aunt Mary gave me a beautiful work-box, and Uncle Joseph a ruby-ring,—and, oh, dear me! there were lots more that I have forgotten all about!"

"That comes of being an only child," said Emily, laughing. "*Our* presents were divided among so many, that I can remember mine very well. But the one that I liked best was a set of chess-men; we had so much fun with *that*."

"What did *you* get?" asked Antoinette, turning to Clara Henwood.

"Why," replied Clara, who seemed to be starting from a brown study, "I got a very pretty handkerchief, and a fan, and—"

"*Useful* things!" interrupted Antoinette, laughing. "Poh! I wouldn't give a fig for *them!*"

The colour mounted to Clara's face, and she looked extremely angry; but she busied herself in pushing a troublesome atlas farther into her satchel; and Emily exclaimed, gayly—

"Isn't it delightful, when Christmas really comes? It's such fun!"

"Yes," replied Antoinette, "we have so much company then, and every one that comes brings me a present. Last year, we had a Christmas-tree; and papa, and mamma, and I, and all the aunts and cousins went into the room to take our presents; but papa let me have my choice before any of the others, and I took the things that I thought the prettiest."

"I shouldn't think the others would have liked *that* very much," observed Emily.

"It was no matter whether they liked it or not," replied Antoinette; "the tree was bought with papa's own money, and I had the best right to take the first things."

Clara remained silent, thinking what a selfish, disagreeable girl Antoinette Cowden was, and feeling very much disposed to envy her numerous pleasures. Ah, Clara! Clara!—how much better are you—you that judge your neighbour so severely?

Antoinette Cowden stopped at a flight of marble steps to chat awhile with Emily Bassett; and Clara, with a longing look at

the large house, returned the nod of her companions, and walked slowly on.

Clara's dress was not as handsome as Antoinette Cowden's; but it was very neat and comfortable-looking, and perfectly suitable for a little school-girl. Her mother made all her clothes, and had so much else to do that Clara was obliged to be very careful of them, to make them last as long as possible; while Antoinette wore rich dresses at school, and tore and soiled them with the utmost unconcern. "Oh, that was an old thing! *that* was of no consequence;" or, "she was really glad to see the end of that dress, she was tired of the sight of it!"

Clara's home was a moderate-sized house, in a neat, but not elegant, part of the city; and she now sauntered up the steps in a most dissatisfied mood. Mr. Henwood was a merchant who had just commenced business, and, having a large family, he was obliged to be prudent and economical; while Mr. Cowden was a lawyer, with an only child.

Clara found her mother sewing very busily on a new dress for her; and having

taken off her things, she went down stairs to eat her dinner. She had heard Antoinette say that, when she went home from school, she always *dressed* for dinner, for they did not have that meal until six o'clock; and then her father often brought gentlemen home with him, who paid her a great many compliments, and asked to have "the pleasure of wine with her."

Antoinette dwelt on all these things with much satisfaction, particularly to her less fortunate schoolmates; and Clara thought of them very sadly, as she sat eating her solitary dinner, the rest of the family having dined at one o'clock. She could not see why Antoinette should be so much more pleasantly situated than herself; and when she looked at her neatly-cut hair, she wondered why it had not curled naturally, and why she should not feel like smiling as much as Antoinette did.

She looked around their neat basement, with its ingrain carpet and maple chairs, and thought of the elegant room into which Antoinette had taken her, when the two stopped, one day, at Mr. Cowden's to get a

worsted pattern; and, in reply to Clara's admiration, Antoinette had exclaimed, with *such* an air, "Oh, *this* is only the dining-room!"

When Clara went up stairs, her two little sisters were playing in the room where Mrs. Henwood was sewing, and the baby was lying awake in its crib. Beside these, there were two boys, and all were younger than Clara.

"Clara," said her mother, "have you no lessons to learn?"

"No, ma'am," she replied, "not just now; I can study them over in the evening."

"Then," said Mrs. Henwood, "here are some towels and napkins that have been waiting for you this long time. I wish you to take particular pains in hemming them."

Clara very slowly left the window at which she had been standing, and took up the towels most reluctantly.

"I have lost my thimble!" she exclaimed soon.

"I can supply you then," replied her mo-

ther, pointing to several brass ones that were lying in the work-basket.

Clara, however, preferred using her own nice silver one, that had her initials marked on it; and finding that this loss would not prevent her from working, she soon succeeded in finding it. She then complained of the cotton; and finally broke her needle, and was altogether so out of humour that her mother fixed her eye upon her sorrowfully and reprovingly. Clara blushed beneath her gaze, and, remembering how little rest her mother had, applied herself more diligently.

"What a nice time Antoinette Cowden has!" said she, with a sigh. "Nothing to do but to amuse herself, and be waited upon, and have people make her beautiful presents!"

"Antoinette is an only child," replied Mrs. Henwood, "and her father is a very rich man."

"How pleasant it is to be an only child!" exclaimed Clara—"to be so petted, and made a fuss with!"

"Clara," said her mother gravely, "that

is a very wicked speech of yours. The *time* may come when you would be very thankful to have sisters and brothers."

Clara had not *intended* to say any thing wicked; but she sat there feeling very discontented.

"Mother," said she, after a long pause, "what are we to have this year for Christmas presents?"

Mrs. Henwood smiled. "I really have not thought about it yet," she replied. "When people havn't much money to spend, it takes but a short time to decide. You know, Clara," continued her mother, affectionately, "that, if I had it in my power, nothing would make me happier than to give you pleasure; but my long illness this year was very expensive, and we have even less money to spend than usual."

Clara drew a long sigh. "Well," said she, "I do hope that I shall not get *useful* things this time! Antoinette Cowden was laughing, this afternoon, at my last year's presents. I don't like Antoinette, at all," she continued.

"Why not?" asked her mother.

"Oh, because," she replied, "she is so conceited and selfish, and proud of all her handsome things."

"Do you ever reflect," said Mrs. Henwood, "that she has a great deal to spoil her? Does it never enter your head, when wishing for such a lot as hers, that if *you* were an only child, and had every thing you wanted, and were very prettily dressed, and always smiling and happy, that perhaps your head would be somewhat turned, and you might be even as bad as Antoinette herself?"

Clara felt almost certain, from the tone of her mother's voice, that she did not consider her much better *now;* and she sat and sewed very quietly for a long time.

When Mr. Henwood came home, his pleasant face grew brighter as he noticed the quickness with which Clara ran for his slippers, and pulled forward his arm-chair, and tried to make him comfortable. Clara had a project in her head; and she watched her opportunity when her mother had gone

up stairs to put the younger children to bed.

"Papa," said she, drawing her chair close to his, "are we so *very* poor?"

"I do not know *how* poor 'so very poor' means," replied her father, smilingly. "We are too poor to keep a carriage, and live in an expensive house; but we are not too poor to have all necessary comforts; and when I am seated here, in such a pleasant home, I feel pretty rich."

"It is nearly Christmas now," said Clara next.

"Yes," replied her father, gravely, "it *is* nearly Christmas now; and that is a time, Clara, when I feel the poorest. I see so much suffering to be relieved—so many hungry ones to feed, if I could only do it without taking the bread from my own children."

But Clara's thoughts were not turned this way; and she exclaimed, with much animation, "How I wish, papa, that we could have a nice Christmas, *just for once*, and a Christmas-tree, and things that other people have!"

"And what do you think of hanging *on* the tree?" asked her father. "A new pair of stockings, or a paper of candy for the children, or what?"

"No," replied Clara, somewhat pettishly, "I meant to hang little candles all over it, and all kind of pretty things; and have the presents marked with the names of those for whom they were intended—like the Christmas-trees that I have often heard about."

"Clara," said her father, very seriously, "have you ever reflected, when wishing for such things, that if I should grant your request, and have a Christmas-tree, 'just for *once*,' your mother would have to sew even more steadily than she does now, and make that pain in her back a great deal worse; and that I would be obliged to stay in my gloomy counting-room some hours later, to make up the money it would cost?"

"I am very sorry, papa," said Clara; "I will never speak of it again."

Mr. Henwood smiled, as he kissed her affectionately; and when her mother came

down, looking pale and tired, Clara felt that she had been very wicked indeed.

The next day, as Clara was walking home from school, she saw lying on the walk before her a thin, marbled-covered book, having leather loops on the edge, through which was passed a wooden pencil. She picked it up; and having taken out the pencil, she found that it was a sort of memorandum-book, in the front leaf of which were pinned two five-dollar bills.

Clara almost jumped and shouted in the street when she discovered this treasure; and her first thought was—"*Now*, we can have a Christmas-tree! This is all mine, to spend as I choose." She examined the book carefully, and found written on the inside of the cover,—"Maria Wilson, No. 15 ——— street." "Maria Wilson," said Honesty, "is the name of the owner; that is the number of the street where she lives; and, instead of listening a moment to Temptation, you should go and take it back

"She examined the book carefully."—*Page* 154.

to her *now*." "No, no," whispered Temptation, "the book is yours now, for you found it. Maria Wilson needn't have been so careless; and, besides, she is probably rich, and will not miss the money."

Clara put the book in her satchel; and instead of walking homeward, she wandered in another direction, thinking as she went. Instead of looking upon the money at once as another's, she felt now as unwilling to give it up as if it had really been her own; and after picturing a Christmas-tree, and herself the generous distributor of presents, she resolved to keep the money.

She went home in a troubled state of mind; for not all the reasons she could urge persuaded her that it was *right*, and she felt afraid to meet her mother's eye or look any one in the face.

"What is the matter, Clara?" asked Mrs. Henwood, who noticed that Clara appeared restless and uncomfortable.

"I have a bad headache," she replied, glad of an excuse that happened to be a truthful one. I say *happened*, for I am afraid that,

having committed one error, Clara would not have hesitated at another to escape discovery; and it generally happens that the commission of *one* fault leads to more.

Instead of going to sleep as usual, the moment that her head touched the pillow, Clara twisted and turned, and thought of the book she had found; and went to school the next day with it still in her satchel. She was so much occupied in thinking of her treasure, that she recited her lessons badly, and got two or three marks for inattention.

Very much dissatisfied with herself, she sauntered slowly home; and having carefully taken out the bills, she dropped the book in the street, and then walked on very fast, afraid of she scarcely knew what, and wondering that she did not feel happier.

"Why, Clara!" exclaimed her father, when she told him that she had found ten dollars; "you have indeed been lucky! But we must advertise it," he added.

"*Advertise it!*" exclaimed Clara, as she looked not at all pleased.

"Certainly," replied Mr. Henwood, gravely. "I shall advertise that a small sum of money has been found, and mention the time and place; for this may be the earnings of some poor person, who can illy afford to lose it. If no one claims it in a week, it shall then be yours."

Mr. Henwood had it put in the paper the very next day; and Clara hoped that the person who had lost it would not see the advertisement. At every ring of the bell she started, and feared that now she would have to give up the money; but the week passed, and no owner appeared.

"There, Clara," said her father, as he handed her the ten dollars, "you have certainly been a very fortunate little girl; and *I* should like to find such things often, if it could be done without making others unhappy. Now let me hear how wise a use you intend to make of this money?"

"I intend to have a Christmas-tree *now*, papa!" exclaimed Clara, while her eyes brightened at the thought. "Antoinette Cowden always talks so much about *their* Christmas-tree; and we can put all the

presents together on it, and have such a nice time! Won't *the children* be delighted?"

"But, Clara," said her mother, "I hope that you don't think of spending *the whole* of this money so foolishly? Suppose that you save half of it for some future occasion?"

But Clara, having been guilty of *dishonesty* for the sake of the Christmas-tree, was not at all disposed to profit by her mother's prudent advice.

"Surely you cannot think it *foolish*, mother!" she exclaimed, "to spend it in a way that will make others happy too? I am sure that Antoinette Cowden would have spent it all on herself!"

Mrs. Henwood took no notice of Clara's parade of generosity, as she replied, "Whether it is 'foolish' or not, depends upon *circumstances*. If you were likely to find more money soon, I should not think it foolish to have a Christmas-tree; but as that is not at all probable, I think it would be wiser to save a portion of it for a time when you may need it more."

Clara, however, was very unwilling to agree to this proposal; and her father and mother concluded to let her take her own course, of which she would doubtless see the folly in time.

"Clara," said her father, one morning, "how much of your money have you given in *charity?*"

Clara blushed, and looked very much confused.

"I think," he continued, "that if you go down stairs, you will feel like spending a small portion of it for something better than mere amusement."

Clara went into the kitchen, and found, sitting close by the fire, a poor old woman, who had often been there for cold victuals, and any thing else that could be spared. She was very thinly clad for so cold a day; and Mrs. Henwood was preparing her a bowl of warm coffee.

Clara knew that she was very poor, and that she often suffered with cold and hunger; but, as she handed her half-a-dollar, she reflected that she would have so much less for her Christmas-tree.

"Thank ye, miss," said the woman, gratefully, as the silver was placed in her hand; "and may yer own Christmas be happier for having remembered the poor!"

"I do hope," said Clara, when she saw her father again, "that there will be no *more* people for me to give money to! I have now only nine and a half dollars left!"

"Clara," said Mr. Henwood, very gravely, as he placed a bright half-dollar on the table, "charity that is given so grudgingly is never acceptable in the eyes of Him who 'loveth the *cheerful* giver;' and, since you are so unwilling, I prefer paying the money myself."

Clara felt so ashamed and unhappy that she burst into tears; but her father insisted so sternly upon her taking the money, that she dared not disobey him. How many *little* acts of wickedness had followed the first one! And that seemed likely to yield her more unhappiness than pleasure.

As Christmas approached, Clara imagined herself very happy in going about to the toy-shops and making purchases; and she

talked a great deal to the school-girls about the Christmas-tree that they were going to have; and she was very angry when Antoinette Cowden exclaimed, laughingly—

"Dear me! *We* have had so many Christmas-trees, that I am almost tired of them; but Clara Henwood talks as though she had never heard of such a thing before!"

The girls all laughed, and crowded around Antoinette; for there was a rumour afloat that she intended to give a party very shortly, and all were anxious to be among the invited.

Christmas-eve came; and, at the proper time, Clara opened the doors, and displayed her Christmas-tree very nicely arranged on a table, and quite brilliant with little wax candles. Santa Claus was perched on the topmost branch; and the children were very much delighted. Mr. and Mrs. Henwood very kindly praised Clara's taste and judgment in the arrangement; which made her feel somewhat unhappy that she had not paid more deference to their advice.

The children were impatient for their presents, and grew clamorous to have them taken down; and Clara thought it a great pity to spoil the tree so soon; but the baby suddenly made a snatch at a piece of glittering confectionery, and came near setting the whole on fire.

The tree was now stripped of its ornaments, until nothing was left but the bare branches; and Clara felt surprised that the enjoyment to which she had looked forward so long, for which she had *lost* so much, should so soon be over. All Christmas-day she wandered about the house, not knowing what to do with herself; she felt restless and unhappy.

The days passed on; and when the children had eaten the confectionery, and broken the toys, they seemed to forget the Christmas-tree, and Clara found nothing left but remorse. The name of Maria Wilson was constantly in her mind; and she often found herself wondering what kind of person she was—whether old or young, rich or poor.

One evening, in January, Clara sat reading at the centre-table; but although the book was very interesting, she found herself listening to her mother's voice, without at all comprehending the sense of the story.

"I am very glad," said Mr. Henwood, in answer to something his wife had said, "that you have engaged a person at last. It has troubled me very much to think that you were over-exerting yourself."

"It is quite a charity to employ her," said Mrs. Henwood; "she has very few customers, and really seems to be a very deserving person. Several ladies of the Society have applied to me before in Maria Wilson's behalf; but I have always felt as though I ought not to employ her myself, and my friends appeared to be well supplied with seamstresses."

Clara started at the well-remembered name, and a strong pang of remorse shot through her heart. She was not rich, then; she was a poor seamstress, whom, her mother said, "it was a *charity* to employ." How she hated herself for what she had

done! How she hated the remembrance of the Christmas-tree! And how she felt that it would be impossible for her to have another happy moment!

She could scarcely sleep all night, thinking of Maria Wilson; and her mother had said that she was coming there the next day.

She dressed herself early in the morning, and went to the room where the seamstress sat. The door was not quite closed; and she stood there trembling, and looked through at a pale thin-looking girl, who seemed very grave, even sad, and who coughed quite often a low, dry hack, that seemed habitual to her.

Clara's feelings were almost punishment enough; but just as she was going back—for she could not bear to go into the room—her mother came up and stopped her.

"Come in here, Clara," said Mrs. Henwood; "perhaps you can be useful in some way."

The seamstress was making a jacket for one of the boys; and Clara was soon sent down for a hot iron to press out the seams.

When she returned, her mother was talking to Maria about her cough.

"It *is* pretty bad now," replied the girl. "It is worse this winter, I think, than it has been for some time."

Mrs. Henwood glanced at a very thin old shawl, that was lying beside a well-worn bonnet, and, as if afraid of hurting her feelings, she said, hesitatingly—

"Have you nothing warmer than *that* to wear this bitter weather?"

A bright colour burned in Maria's pale cheek, and she replied, quickly, as though she disliked to speak of her own necessities—

"No, ma'am, I have but few friends, and I need all the money I can get to spend on others. I met with quite a misfortune in the early part of the winter," she added: "I had saved ten dollars, to buy a comfortable shawl, and I pinned this, for safe-keeping, in my memorandum-book; but one day I had been sewing very steadily, and I went home with such a violent headache, that I could scarcely think of any thing else. When I reached the house, I

found that the book was gone. I suppose that it dropped from my hand as I walked listlessly along. I went back to look for it; but I never found it, and I have not been able to make up the money since."

"Did you not advertise it?" asked Mrs. Henwood, who felt very much interested in the poor girl's misfortune.

"No," she replied, "I couldn't spare the money! and I don't believe it would have been of any use."

Clara felt a stinging sensation of shame, when her mother observed—"Any *honest* person would have returned it."

"It was not an honest person that found it," replied Maria, "for my name and number were written in the book."

Clara could remain in the room no longer; but as she was leaving it, her mother told her to bring her the cloak that hung in her closet. This added to Clara's remorseful feelings. The garment in question, although neither fresh nor handsome, was large and warm, and Mrs. Henwood's chief dependence in cold weather; for a handsome shawl, that she wore on great oc-

casions, was not half the protection from the cold; but Clara knew that her mother, thinking only of Maria's cough instead of her own comfort, intended to give her this cloak.

Nor was she mistaken. Mrs. Henwood said, *so* kindly—"It will give me a great deal of pleasure to see you wear this cloak; I have found it a very serviceable one."

The tears came into Maria's eyes, and she could scarcely express her gratitude.

Clara went to her own room, and sat there weeping bitterly. All around seemed dark and dreadful; she appeared to herself the greatest wretch in existence, and she sobbed and cried until she had worked herself into a perfect fever.

"Why, Clara!" said a gentle voice, that she knew to be her mother's, "what *is* the matter?"

"Oh, mother!" she exclaimed, "you will no longer call me your child; I have been *so* wicked!"

Mrs. Henwood looked pale and troubled;

but she sat down kindly by Clara, and tried to win her confidence.

"Remember, my child," said she, "that if you have done wickedly, the best way is to confess your fault, and, if possible, repair it."

"I can never *repair* it!" sobbed Clara; "and that makes me feel more wretched; but you shall hear all, mother."

When Mrs. Henwood learned the extent of her daughter's wickedness, she looked so pale and still, that Clara was afraid she would faint; but her mother made an effort to compose herself, and said, in a voice that went to her daughter's very heart—

"Clara! had any one else told me this of you, I should not have believed it. It grieves me more than I can express, that I have a child who would do such a thing!"

When Clara saw that her mother was actually crying, she felt as if her heart would break.

"Oh, mother!" she exclaimed, "I really didn't *mean* to be so wicked! If any one had told me beforehand that I would do such a thing, I should have been very much

shocked. But after I had found the money, it seemed as though I had a right to it."

"After you had tried to excuse it to your own conscience, you mean," said Mrs. Henwood. I do not believe that, when you first saw Maria Wilson's name written in that book, you felt as if you had a right to it?"

Clara could not say that she did; and, after a pause, she asked, very humbly, "Is it necessary, mother, for me to tell Maria Wilson, and ask her forgiveness?"

Mrs. Henwood saw that Clara's penitence would lead her to any step, however humiliating; but she could not bear to have the seamstress know how dishonourable her daughter had been, and, as the *acknowledgment* could do Maria no good, she advised Clara to wait and consult her father.

When Mrs. Henwood returned to the sewing-room, there were traces of tears on her face, and Maria Wilson wondered what had caused her so much grief. Mrs. Henwood was so much overcome by this new trouble, that she scarcely spoke all day;

and the sewing-room was very quiet and cheerless.

Clara spent many wretched hours until her father's return; but at the first opportunity she told him the whole story, and expected, at the least, a severe reprimand.

He did not cry, as her mother had done; but he looked as though his daughter's conduct had made heavier the cares that seemed already weighing him down.

"Clara," said he, at length, "in this one transgression you have broken many of the commandments. You made to yourself an idol—this Christmas-tree—on which your thoughts and wishes centred, and to it you sacrificed your sense of honesty; your duty to your parents, for they wished you to appropriate at least *part* of the money differently; and your peace of mind, for I am quite certain that your great error has been productive of little but misery."

"It was not half the pleasure that I expected," replied Clara, thoroughly humbled; "and I should not care for another Christmas-tree, even if—— if the money were my own," she would have added;

but, overcome by the recollection of what she had done, she stopped short.

"With respect to telling Maria," continued Mr. Henwood, "I cannot see what advantage it would be to her, unless you can return the money at the same time."

Oh, how Clara wished that she had followed her mother's advice, and kept at least five dollars, for that would have been better to return than none!

"Papa," said she, "is there no way by which I could *earn* this money? I would work hard all day to make it up!"

"I do not know of any way," replied her father; "and it will be very inconvenient for *me* to spare it just now; yet this poor girl must not be the sufferer."

"There is one thing that I can do!" exclaimed Clara, after thinking for a few moments. "If I cannot earn this money, I can at least *save* it; and by living on dry bread for three months, or even more, wouldn't it amount to ten dollars?"

Mr. Henwood was pleased with this suggestion; it showed that Clara was really anxious to repair the effects of what she had

done; and she felt happier than she had felt yet, since that miserable day, when her father told her that he thought it would do very well, and that it was the only way in which she could make up the loss.

Mrs. Henwood felt very uncomfortable to see Clara at her diet of dry bread; but her husband replied—

"You know, my dear wife, that the mere consideration of *money* would not induce me to punish Clara in this manner; but it was her own suggestion, and I have no doubt that it will really do her good. I am a firm believer in the penitence that mourns in sackcloth and ashes; and I think that her sin will now be indelibly impressed upon her mind."

A few evenings after this, Mr. Henwood told Clara to get her bonnet and cloak, and accompany him upon a walk.

She obeyed, without asking any questions; and after walking on briskly through several streets, they turned into one that looked dark and narrow. Mr. Henwood knocked at the door of a small house; and

after waiting a few moments, it was opened by Maria Wilson.

She invited them to walk in, and led the way to a small sitting-room; where they found a very old man and a younger woman, who looked very sick and patient. These were Maria's grandfather and mother; and as they were entirely unable to work themselves, it took all her earnings to support them.

Clara sat down in a very unhappy frame of mind; and Mr. Henwood talked to the older people about their ailments; while Maria, putting down the small lamp with which she had lighted them through the passage-way, took up a piece of dark cloth, and stitched and stitched, until it seemed as though the very flesh would be worn from her fingers.

"You met with a loss last winter," said Mr. Henwood, as he handed the girl a ten-dollar bill: "I have fortunately discovered the person who found the money, and I hope that it does not come too late to be serviceable?"

Maria's grateful look, as she thanked him,

seemed an additional reproach to Clara; it told her how *much* the money had been missed.

"Clara," said her father, kindly, when they were once more in the street, "you have now seen that there are people in the world who are more in need of money than we—worthy people, too, who are far more deserving of a better fate. You see too, that it was this wicked repining which led you to do that for which, I trust, you are now sincerely penitent."

Clara answered with a burst of tears, and felt that she did not deserve the kindness with which she had been treated.

She had a great deal to overcome, but she persevered, and entirely quelled the rebellious spirit which had so often led her to repine at her fate. She even listened to the boastings of Antoinette Cowden with a placid smile; and succeeded so well in lightening the cares and troubles of her parents, that they called her "Our Sunbeam" —a name that was retained even after Mr. Henwood became a rich man.

THE LITTLE ORPHAN.

The Orphan Asylum was a large gloomy-looking building, situated quite out of the city, on a hill that was almost bare of trees or shrubbery. It looked bleak in winter, and hot in summer; the windows had neither blinds nor shutters, and there were no pleasant play-grounds; yet, in this building there were at least a hundred children, who were taught to be thankful that they lived there.

Some of them had been taken from dark cellars — some from dismal alley-ways — some, poor little things! from the bedsides of dying parents; and all from poverty, and suffering, and distress. Santa Claus never visited the Orphan Asylum; there were no little stockings hung around the fire-place; for the people who supported the children had quite enough to do to feed and clothe them, and they never knew the pleasures

of Christmas, except that, on that day, they had rather a better dinner than usual.

The children in this place were very much like those that are to be found everywhere. Some were quarrelsome and domineering, and others were quiet, and apt to be imposed upon; there were little toddling things, who could scarcely walk, and there were others large enough to do nearly all the work of the place.

One Christmas-eve, the ladies who directed the affairs of the asylum determined to give a donation-party. They told people of this, and had it advertised in the papers; and all who wished to do something for the orphans were allowed to come. Some people sent boxes of shoes for the children to wear; some gave calico, to make them dresses; and others sent barrels of flour, and sugar, and different kinds of provisions. A great many people gave money; and this, after all, was the most acceptable, because the managers, who knew best what was wanted, could spend it as they thought proper.

Every one who went took something;

and although it was a very quiet party—there being no dancing or playing of any description—there were so many people present that the building was quite crowded. In the dining-room, there was a long table set out with coffee and biscuit, ham, and several kinds of cake; and although the visitors considered this a very plain treat, the orphans thought it quite a sumptuous feast. However, no one expected any thing very splendid on a visit of charity; and the table was so little disturbed during the evening, that it served for a Christmas-treat the next day.

The visitors were allowed to go through all the rooms, which were kept in perfect neatness; and in some of the upper apartments the younger children had already been put to bed. The visitors thronged into these rooms to gaze at the little orphans, who lay snugly tucked up: some fast asleep, and others sitting up in bed, and eating, with much satisfaction, the presents of candy that were liberally showered upon them. It was generally noticed, after a visit of this description, that the *prettiest*

children were the most apt to be sick next day.

There was one little bed, around which a crowd was constantly gathered. The child, whose long, light curls fell over the pillow in such profusion, was about four years old, and looked more like a piece of delicate wax-work than a human being. She was asleep, and her long lashes rested on a cheek rosy with health, while every one declared that her beautiful little mouth looked exactly like a rosebud.

Little orphans are not *always* pretty, and few of the other children were very attractive-looking; but people stood gazing at this picture of sleeping innocence until they almost forgot to move away.

Among those who remained longest gazing upon the lovely child were a tall, benevolent-looking gentleman, and his daughter, a very pretty girl, about twelve years old. Helen was Mr. Sefton's only child; her mother had died when she was very young, and her indulgent father seldom opposed her in any thing. She was really good-hearted, although unconsciously sel-

fish from being accustomed to have her will deferred to in every thing; and she now took this quite as a natural thing, and would have been very much surprised at any opposition. Mr. Sefton was very wealthy, and Helen was pretty and amiable. She was a great favourite with her acquaintances, and spent her time very pleasantly, without thinking that she had any duty but to enjoy herself.

"Is she not beautiful, papa?" she whispered, for the twentieth time at least.

"Yes," replied Mr. Sefton, smiling at his daughter's enthusiasm, "very pretty indeed! Poor little thing!" he continued, "she is just about the age that *you* were, Helen, when you were left without a mother; but this poor child has no kind father to supply her place."

Helen looked sad, for she could just remember her mother—pale and thin on her sick bed; and Mr. Sefton was suddenly grave as he watched the sleeping child.

Soon after this, they left the room; and Helen, drawing her father into a retired corner, whispered—

"I have chosen my Christmas-gift, papa."

Mr. Sefton smiled at Helen's sudden decision, for this important matter had been agitated for several weeks.

"Well," he replied, "I suppose then that I may send for the horse to-morrow?"

"No," said Helen; "I have not chosen the horse. I had rather, papa, that you would let me take this little girl home. I would teach her, and take care of her, and she should be *my* child altogether. It would be so pleasant to have such a pretty little girl to pet! She could be my sister, you know."

Mr. Sefton looked very grave at first when he heard this proposal, for it was no slight responsibility for Helen to take charge of a young child; but, as he stood there, reflecting about it, his daughter knew, from the expression of his face, that he meant to say "yes." He thought that, as Helen was entirely alone, without brother or sister, it might be an advantage to her to take home this little girl, who, being so much younger, would claim a degree of

care and self-denial that might counteract the influence of the unlimited indulgence bestowed upon "the only child."

He felt very sorry, too, for the little thing: it seemed a pity that so much sweetness should be buried in the gloomy Orphan Asylum, where she would grow up accustomed to hard work and rough fare, and have to toil along a weary pilgrimage; until at length the encouraging look, that Helen had been anxiously watching, deepened into a smile, and Mr. Sefton gave his full consent to his daughter's scheme of taking little Katy for a Christmas-gift.

Helen was so impatient to carry off her prize, that she would have taken up the child immediately, and put her in the carriage; but her father persuaded her to wait until the next day; and the superintendent having agreed to the arrangement, it was decided that Katy should leave the asylum on Christmas-day.

The child still slept soundly, quite unconscious of the change about to be made in her hitherto humble existence. Two years ago, a kind lady had taken her from the

arms of a dying mother, who was a widow, and destitute of every comfort; but as the lady had a large family of her own, and her husband was by no means a wealthy man, little Katy was placed in the Orphan Asylum, which was not near so gloomy as the home she had left. The simple circumstance of the petted daughter of the wealthy Mr. Sefton having taken a fancy to go to the donation-party, had made this second change in her circumstances.

All the next day, Helen was so full of her plan for little Katy's benefit, that her father often smiled, as he hoped that this enthusiasm would not die out. Helen was somewhat sobered by her father's earnest manner, when, as they were going for the child, he said—

"Now remember, Helen, that this little girl is placed in your charge: you have taken upon yourself this responsibility, and you will be answerable for the manner in which you discharge it. No one will be allowed to interfere with your arrangements; and I hope that you will never forget the *sacredness* of your trust."

This sounded very solemn, to be sure; but she did not want Katy for any thing but to treat her kindly, and why should she ever feel disposed to do differently?

So Helen tripped gayly up the steps, and seized the child so suddenly, that it seemed to Katy very much like being kidnapped; but the young lady almost smothered her with kisses—for now that the child's dark-blue eyes were open, she was lovelier than ever—and looked and spoke so pleasantly, that Katy began to smile, and feel perfectly willing to go home with Helen.

Several of the children gathered around, and thought what a fine thing it was for Katy to go off in that handsome carriage, and wished that some nice young lady would come and take *them* off.

The drive made Katy very sleepy, and Helen was not quite pleased when she saw her eyes close, and Mr. Sefton took the tired child in his arms; but her father discovered her thoughts, and said—

"Remember, Helen, that *every thing* will not be exactly as you wish in this matter; your patience will often be tried,

and we shall see how well you will bear it."

Helen felt ashamed of her momentary displeasure, and, as she looked upon her sleeping Christmas-gift, her face regained its accustomed smiles.

She enjoyed Katy's surprise, on waking, to find herself in a large handsome room, lying in a little crib that had formerly been occupied by Helen; but when the child was taken up, and put in possession of the numerous toys that had been provided for her, the room fairly rang with her shouts of delight.

She was a merry little thing; and soon felt so much at home that she would climb on Mr. Sefton's knee, and put her arms around Helen's neck, as if she had lived there all her life.

Helen's first care was to provide a variety of pretty dresses for her little protégé; and she took so much pleasure in curling her hair, and dressing and undressing her, that Katy was often wearied, and cried to return to her toys. The child was triumphantly displayed to all Helen's acquaintances as

her little sister; and they admired her so much, that her young protectress felt very proud of her, and was glad that she had thought of choosing such a Christmas-gift.

The only person in the house who seemed unfriendly to Katy was Miss Gusher, the housekeeper. This lady was a distant cousin of Mr. Sefton's; but as she had never been married, and had no children of her own, she considered them useless incumbrances, and was very angry that Mr. Sefton should bring one home from the Orphan Asylum. However, she did not dare to complain, for her cousin certainly had a right to do as he pleased in his own house; but she gave the child very cross looks, and frequent pushes, whenever she happened to pass her; and Helen seemed to delight in plaguing Miss Gusher, by petting Katy as much as possible before her.

Mr. Sefton brought home a beautiful set of picture-letters, and Helen ran off to her own room with Katy, in order to teach her the mysteries of the alphabet. At first, the child was very much interested by the pictures and the idea of learning, and she soon

knew several letters; but Helen wished her to learn with a rapidity that was extremely fatiguing to so young a child, for she was anxious to exhibit her as a specimen of her own powers of teaching; and when Katy grew stupid, and persisted in playing instead of studying, Helen became very angry, and shut her up in a closet, to show her authority.

Katy cried a little while, and then fell asleep; and when her young teacher opened the door, and saw the pretty child lying there, her cheek wet with tears, her conscience smote her for her harshness, and she lifted Katy up tenderly, and sat down with her in her arms until she awoke. All was reconciled between the two, and Katy quite forgot her troubles in a game of romps.

But Miss Gusher had witnessed the punishment with considerable satisfaction; and the very same day, when Katy happened to offend her in some trifle, she pushed the child into a dark wardrobe, and turned the key upon her.

Katy was now full of life and spirits, and felt more like playing than going to sleep;

so, instead of sobbing quietly, she screamed out with anger and pain, for Miss Gusher's sharp fingers had left their marks upon her plump little arms. Katy kicked violently at the door of the wardrobe, and stamped, and raised such a disturbance, that Helen was quite terrified, and, running into the room, she distinguished Katy's voice from the depths of the gloomy closet.

To Miss Gusher's great displeasure, she released the frightened child, whom the darkness and the violence of passion had excited almost into a fit; and running to her father, she complained vehemently of the housekeeper's interference. Mr. Sefton remonstrated with his cousin upon her conduct; but, to his great surprise, she accused Helen of inflicting a similar punishment upon her charge.

"Helen," said her father, very gravely, "is this true?"

Helen hung her head in embarrassment, and then burst into tears.

"I am very sorry," continued Mr. Sefton, "that you could so far forget the relative positions of yourself and that poor, helpless

child, as to visit your anger upon her in this manner. The conduct of others toward her will be regulated by yours; and you see what an infringement of your duty has already produced. I hope, Helen, that this will be the *last*, as it is the *first*, time."

It *was* the last time. Helen's good feelings were touched; and her patience with little Katy, under many provocations, was really remarkable. Miss Gusher became quite jealous of the child's influence in the house, and watched Helen's conduct narrowly, in hopes to detect some sign of the favourite's downfall. But all went on smoothly. Katy, when properly treated, was sweet-tempered and loving; and Helen petted her, and taught her, and dressed her with all the zest that children feel for a new plaything; her father's smile showed that he approved her conduct; and Helen persuaded herself that she had quite overcome every evil disposition, and was really a very praiseworthy character.

So matters went on until spring.

Helen had, to be sure, selected the little orphan as her Christmas-gift; but as the weather became mild, her indulgent father purchased the horse on which her heart had been set, and willingly gratified her wish to attend riding-school. Every day, Helen took her lesson, and gave her whole attention to this delightful study.

At first she had taken Katy to the riding-school with her; but finding this troublesome, she soon left her at home, and contented herself with providing some amusement for the child during her absence. But, gradually, this was forgotten, as Helen became more absorbed in her horse, and Katy was left to roam about the house; and get into various kinds of mischief.

Sometimes she meddled with Miss Gusher's store-closet, and then would come a heavy punishment, entirely disproportioned to the offence; but Helen was not often informed of these proceedings, for Katy did not wish to acknowledge her faults; and, perhaps she saw that her young benefactress

was not as much interested in her happiness as formerly.

The summer months approached, and Mr. Sefton's town residence was closed; the whole family having removed to a pleasant country-seat, a few miles from the city.

Katy's delight at the freedom she now enjoyed was unbounded. She would roll amid the soft grass, and string wreaths of wild flowers, or search for berries, and chase butterflies for hours together. She mimicked the notes of the little birds that clustered in the trees, and sent up her clear voice in shouts of innocent merriment; she climbed on the loads of hay, and swung on the gates, and became a perfect little hoyden.

Helen, too, was revelling in the freedom of this beautiful country-life; every pleasant day her horse was brought forth, and off she cantered to the shade of the woods, or some quiet bypath, forgetful of every thing save her own enjoyment. She had named her horse "Rambler," and she seemed to make it appropriate, for there was scarcely a route within several miles of her father's place that the two did not explore.

Helen felt proud of herself, when equipped in her pretty riding-habit of blue cloth, and mounted on her cream-coloured horse; she loved to hear people say, "There goes the wealthy Mr. Sefton's daughter," and have the children exclaim—"Oh! there's a lady on horseback! Come and see the beautiful lady!" She taught Rambler to leap fences, and gloried in the praise bestowed upon her spirit by gentlemen; and lived so much upon horseback, that she seemed almost to have become a part of the animal, like the Centaurs in fabulous story.

Where was little Katy all this time? Helen did not *mean* to do wrong—she had no idea of ill-treating the child or neglecting her; but she found Rambler so much more interesting, and so little trouble, that she devoted herself almost entirely to him, and left Katy to take care of herself.

At first, the child thought it a very grand thing to see Helen go off in such fine style; and the young lady would often take her upon the horse until they had passed

through the large gate, and then Katy would stand waiting for the pleasant farewell, and the shake of the little riding-whip, and watch Helen until she was quite out of sight. But after a while, she would forget to notice Katy, as she stood there waiting; and then the child went to her plays, and left off coming to see Helen mount.

Those long ringlets were now often tangled and in disorder; and Katy's pretty dresses were torn by briers and soiled in the muddy brooks. Helen had reprimanded her so sharply for appearing before visitors in this condition, that the child now seldom came into the parlour, and preferred hiding herself from observation.

Mr. Sefton sometimes discovered little Katy in a deplorable condition, and expressed his displeasure so plainly to Helen, that, for a time, she would rouse herself, and take as much pains with her charge as formerly. But this only lasted a short time; Rambler would enter her thoughts in the midst of these duties, and away she went, over

hedges and ditches, while Katy relapsed into her usual state.

Mr. Sefton came home one night, looking very grave and uneasy. Important business made it necessary for him to take a trip to Europe: he would be gone three months; and as he had never yet left his daughter for so long a time, he felt not a little disturbed.

But he candidly told Helen that the greater part of his uneasiness was on Katy's account.

"I see," said he, "that your Christmas-gift has already lost the freshness of novelty, and you find your plaything *troublesome.* Before I go, Helen, tell me if it is your wish that I should take Katy back to the Orphan Asylum? She will there receive proper attention, and not be subjected to capricious neglect."

But Helen declared that she was very sorry indeed; that she had not meant to neglect her charge; and pleaded Katy's

wilfulness as an excuse for her own inattention.

But Mr. Sefton asked, very gravely, What had made Katy *wild?* and Helen had no answer to give, unless she acknowledged the non-performance of her duty.

She watched, with tearful eyes, the carriage that conveyed her father to the city; and when she could no longer see it in the distance, she went into the house to indulge in a fit of crying. All her father's kindness rose up before her; and as she thought that, perhaps, she might never see him again, she blamed herself very much for not having attended more to his wishes.

She remembered his directions respecting Katy; and resolving in his absence to do all she could to please him, she immediately went in search of the child.

She called "Katy!" all over the house, but no Katy answered; and she almost despaired of finding her. As soon as the little orphan had bidden farewell to Mr. Sefton, who always spoke kindly to her, she wandered off to a grove beyond the garden,

where she now sat crying at her friend's departure.

Here Helen at last found her; and she spoke so gently, and kissed her so tenderly, that Katy looked up surprised. She was very warm-hearted; and on this first return of affection she put her arms around Helen, and cried, she scarcely knew why.

They were very good friends that day. Rambler was left in his stable; and Helen devoted herself to the task of repairing Katy. She found that she had outgrown most of her dresses, and her busy needle was soon employed upon new ones; for, just then, working for her little charge appeared quite as interesting as dressing a large doll. Katy was sadly tanned and sunburnt; and when Helen dressed her nicely, for the first time in a long while, she reluctantly admitted that the child had lost much of her beauty.

Then came the business of teaching; but this was most discouraging of all. Katy's rambling propensities and long freedom from all restraint had quite unfitted her for study, and she had almost forgotten her let-

ters. The picture-alphabet was partly lost, and it seemed impossible for Katy to make the least progress. Helen lost her patience more than once; and to both teacher and pupil it proved a weary day.

One week was given to repairs and attempts; but the more examinations Helen made, the more discouraged did she become, until she quite despaired of unravelling the tangled thread of Katy's improvement.

Rambler had been neglected for several days, and his mistress needed a ride to recruit her after so much exertion. Once mounted on her horse, Helen threw care to the winds, and left Katy to wander back to the woods.

Every letter from her father mentioned her charge; and after the arrival of the post Katy always received a fresh lesson, and a great many scoldings for her carelessness; but the lesson came too seldom to do her any good, and the scoldings were not near as useful as kindness would have been.

"There stood a little girl, sunburnt and dirty."—*Page* 197.

The three months were passing away, and Mr. Sefton had named the day of his return.

A day or two before his expected arrival Helen had exerted herself to have things just as he would like; but as Katy happened to be out of the way, she deferred her lesson to a more convenient season, and went off for a long ride with Rambler.

While she was gone, her father arrived.

He had returned sooner than he expected; and as he approached the house, he looked eagerly around for his daughter; but then, as he remembered that she could not have expected him so soon, he went in search of her.

In walking through the grounds, he passed a window that opened into the kitchen, and there stood a little girl, sunburnt and dirty, engaged in cleaning knives; her fingers were covered with brickdust, and her dress was scant and faded.

Mr. Sefton stood gazing at her in surprise, and had just identified those long, golden curls, which seemed all that was left of her former looks, when Katy dropped

the knife in her hand, and, recognising Mr. Sefton, burst into tears.

This told the whole story of Helen's neglect, and Miss Gusher's oppression; for the housekeeper delighted to employ the discarded pet in the most menial offices. With a heavy heart, Mr. Sefton called the little girl from the kitchen, and sent her up stairs, to wash herself and change her dress.

A merry voice was heard coming up the avenue; and Helen, radiant with exercise and the pleasure of meeting her father again, presented a very pretty picture, as she rode gayly up to the door.

But Mr. Sefton glanced from her bright face to the sad little figure beside him, with a look that seemed to Helen like volumes of reproof. He lifted his daughter from her horse, and kissed her tenderly; but she saw that he was very grave, and he looked so often at Katy that she felt quite uneasy.

After the child had gone to bed, Helen felt still more awkward; for Mr. Sefton sat with his head leaning on his hand, divided between his love for his daughter and his

displeasure at her inattention to his wishes, and entire neglect of the duty she had taken upon herself.

"Helen," said her father, suddenly, "do you remember the canary that you were once so anxious for me to get you?"

"Yes, papa," replied Helen, in a low voice, and with painfully burning cheeks.

"What became of it?" continued Mr. Sefton.

Helen burst into tears. "Oh, papa!" she exclaimed, thinking him *very* cruel, "you *know* how sorry I was that it died!"

"I know that you *said* you were sorry," replied her father; "but, as it died through your neglect, and you have just repeated the same conduct upon a larger scale, I am forced to doubt your sincerity. Would it not have been better for the canary, if I had taken it from you before it was quite killed?"

Helen only replied by her sobs.

"It grieves me," said Mr. Sefton, "more than I can express, to see my hopes thus disappointed; and, as you are no longer worthy of the trust I reposed in you, I shall

remove Katy from your capricious charge. Your Aunt Agnes will doubtless receive her, and I am in hopes that her gentle firmness will counteract the effects of your injudicious treatment."

Helen wept bitterly at parting with Katy, and, now that she was to be taken from her, all her former affection seemed to have returned; but Mr. Sefton was firm in his determination, and when the sound of the carriage-wheels was lost in the distance, the repentant girl threw herself on the sofa in an agony of sorrow and remorse.

Mr. Sefton was affectionately received by his sister, a widow in delicate health, who lived in a quiet country town; and little Katy was welcomed with much kindness. Mrs. Efland was at once interested in the lonely, neglected child; and promised to bring her up as tenderly as if she had been her own.

Very well satisfied that Katy was now in good hands, Mr. Sefton returned home; and as Helen was really anxious to overcome her faults, she was soon rewarded by her father with all his old affection. The

consequences of her caprice appeared so sudden and unexpected, that she was quite shocked, and often wished for Katy's return, that she might show her father how differently she would treat her.

Mrs. Efland found her task at first somewhat difficult; but as time passed on, and Katy learned to appreciate her kindness, and understand her gentle firmness, she became tractable and obedient, and loved her benefactress so dearly that she would have obeyed any command of hers. This discipline was always the same; there were no fits of alternate indulgence and neglect, as with Helen; and Katy was fast becoming a very lovely little girl.

Four years had passed since the Christmas-eve that Helen Sefton received the gift of a little orphan; and the day again came round. Her father had been suddenly called to his sister's bedside; she was dangerously ill—dying, they thought; and

Helen had now waited several days in suspense respecting her aunt.

There was a bustle in the hall; her father had arrived, and Helen flew down to meet him. She burst into tears when she saw the fatal black crape on his hat; and Mr. Sefton, too, was very sad, for he had just returned from his sister's funeral.

"I have brought you a Christmas-present, Helen," said her father, as he drew forward a sweet-looking little girl, dressed in deep mourning.

Helen could scarcely recognise "little Katy," for the long curls had disappeared, and she was now quite tall; but she kissed her affectionately, and drew her into the parlour.

"She is now your sister, Helen," whispered her father; "but I feel that I need scarcely charge you *now* never to forget this."

Helen's look was sufficient answer; and Katy was soon made to feel that this was henceforth to be her home.

How much pleasure she afterward enjoyed in that dear sister's society, can

scarcely be expressed; and, although this was one of the firesides that Santa Claus did not visit, and the badges of mourning threw a shadow over the group, it was a Christmas-eve, from which much of their after happiness was dated.

THE END.

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